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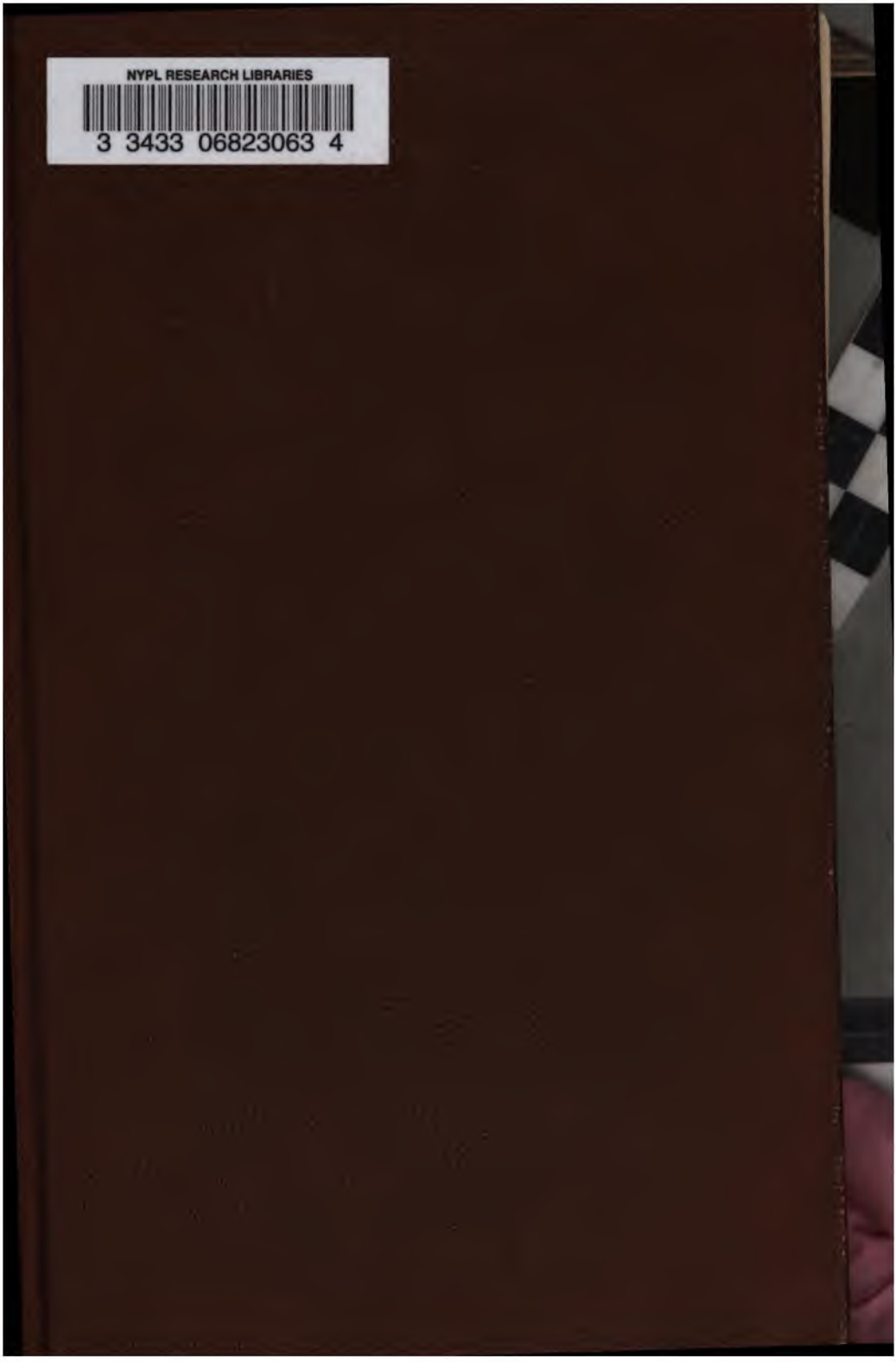
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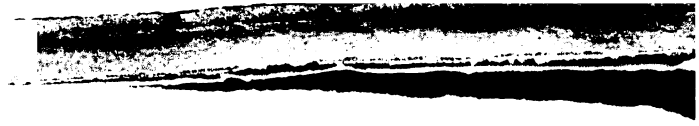

THE

WORKS

OF

PRESIDENT EDWARDS,

IN EIGHT VOLUMES.

VOLUME IV.

CONTAINING

I. A TREATISE CONCERNING RELIGIOUS AFFECTIONS.
II. OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING FAITH.
III. REASONS AGAINST DR. WATTS'S NOTION OF THE PREEXISTENCE OF CHRIST'S HUMAN SOUL.

FIRST AMERICAN EDITION.

PUBLISHED AT WORCESTER,
BY ISAIAH THOMAS, JUN.

ISAAC STURTEVANT, PRINTER.

1808.

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INTRODUCTION.

TO THE TREATISE ON THE AFFECTIONS.

THERE is no question whatsoever, that is of greater importance to mankind, and that it more concerns every individual person to be well resolved in, than this, What are the distinguishing qualifications of those that are in favor with God, and intitled to his eternal rewards? *Or, which comes to the same thing,* What is the nature of true religion? And wherein do lie the distinguishing notes of that virtue and holiness that is acceptable in the sight of God? *But though it be of such importance, and though we have clear and abundant light in the word of God to direct us in this matter, yet there is no one point, wherein professing Christians do more differ one from another. It would be endless to reckon up the variety of opinions in this point, that divide the Christian world; making manifest the truth of that of our Saviour,* "*Strait is the gate and narrow is the way, that leads to life, and few there be that find it.*"

The consideration of these things has long engaged me to attend to this matter, with the utmost diligence and care, and exactness of search and inquiry, that I have been capable of: It is a subject on which my mind has been peculiarly intent, ever since I first entered on the study of divinity. But as to the success of my inquiries, it must be left to the judgment of the reader of the following treatise.

I am sensible it is much more difficult to judge impartially of that which is the subject of this discourse, in the midst of the dust and smoke of such a state of controversy, as this land is now in, about things of this nature: As it is more difficult to write impartially, so it is more difficult to read impartially. Many will probably be hurt in their spirits, to find so much that appertains to religious affection, here condemned: And perhaps indignation and contempt will be excited in others by finding so much here justified and approved. And it may be, some will be ready to charge me with inconsistence with myself, in so much approving some things, and so much condemning others; as I have found this has always been objected to by some, ever since the beginning

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rees in the spring; there are
appear fair and beautiful, and
of young fruits; but many of
ance, they soon fall off, and never

d that it will always be so; for though
is world, be an entire purity; either in par-
t freedom from mixtures of corruption;
without any mixture of hypocrites with
religion, and false appearances of grace
l real holiness: Yet it is evident, that there
much greater purity in the church of God,
ges past; it is plain by these texts of scripture,
liv. 6, 7, 9. *Joel* iii. 17. *Zech.* xiv. 21. *Psal.* lxix.
. xxxv. 8, 10. *chap.* iv. 3, 4. *Ezek.* xx. 38. *Psal.*
. 21, 29. *And one great reason of it will be that at*
will give much greater light to his people, to dis-
between true religion and its counterfeits; Mal. iii. 3.
shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: And he
the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver,
may offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness."
r. 18, *which is a continuation of the prophecy of the same*
mes. "*Then shall ye return, and discern between the*
and the wicked; between him that serveth God, and him
him not."
the mixture of counterfeit religion with true, not dis-
distinguished, that the devil has had his greatest ad-
against the cause and kingdom of Christ, all along hither-
by this means, principally, that he has prevailed against
ngs of religion, that ever have been, since the first
f the Christian Church. By this, he hurt the cause of
nity, in, and after the apostolic age, much more than by
the persecutions of both Jews and Heathens: The apostles,
ll their epistles, shew themselves much more concerned at the
mer mischief, than the latter. By this, Satan prevailed a-
nst the reformation, began by Luther, Zuingilus, &c. to put a
to its progress, and bring it into disgrace; ten times more,
n by all those bloody, cruel, and before unheard of persecutions
the church of Rome. By this, principally has he prevailed
inst revivals of religion, that have been in our nation since the
ormation. By this he prevailed against Newengland, to quench
love and spoil the joy of her espousals, about an hundred years
. And I think, I have had opportunity enough to see plainly
t by this the devil has prevailed against the late, great revival
religion in Newengland, so happy and promising in its begin-
g: Here most evidently has been the main advantage Satan

has had against us ; by this he has foiled us : It is by this means, that the daughter of Zion in this land, now lies on the ground, in such piteous circumstances, as we now behold her ; with her garments rent, her face disfigured, her nakedness exposed, her limbs broken, and weltering in the blood of her own wounds, and in no wise able to arise ; and this, so quickly after her late great joys and hopes : Lam. i. 17. "Zion spreadeth forth her hands, and there is none to comfort her : The Lord hath commanded concerning Jacob, that his adversaries shall be round about him : Jerusalem is as a menstruous woman among them." I have seen the devil prevail the same way, against two great revivings of religion in this country. Satan goes on with mankind, as he began with them. He prevailed against our first parents, and cast them out of paradise, and suddenly brought all their happiness and glory to an end, by appearing to be a friend to their happy paradisaic state, and pretending to advance it to higher degrees. So the same cunning serpent, that beguiled Eve through his subtilty, by perverting us from the simplicity that is in Christ, hath suddenly prevailed to deprive us of that fair prospect, we had a little while ago, of a kind of paradisaic state of the church of God in Newengland.

After religion has revived in the church of God, and enemies appear, people that are engaged to defend its cause, are commonly most exposed, where they are least sensible of danger. While they are wholly intent upon the opposition that appears openly before them, to make head against, that, and do neglect carefully to look all around them, the devil comes behind them, and gives a fatal stab unseen ; and has opportunity to give a more home stroke, and wound the deeper, because he strikes at his leisure, and according to his pleasure, being obstructed by no guard or resistance.

And so it is likely ever to be in the church, whenever religion revives remarkably, till we have learned well to distinguish between true and false religion, between saving affections and experiences, and those manifold fair shews, and glistening appearances, by which they are counterfeited ; the consequences of which when they are not distinguished, are often inexpressibly dreadful. By this means, the devil gratifies himself, by bringing it to pass, that that should be offered to God, by multitudes, under a notion of a pleasing acceptable service to him, that is indeed above all things abominable to him. By this means he deceives great multitudes about the state of their souls ; making them think they are something, when they are nothing ; and so eternally undoes them ; and not only so, but establishes many in a strong confidence of their eminent holiness, who are in God's sight some of the vilest of hypocrites. By this means, he many ways damps

and wounds religion in the hearts of the saints, obscures and deforms it by corrupt mixtures, causes their religious affections woefully to degenerate, and sometimes for a considerable time, to be like the manna, that bred worms and stank; and dreadfully ensnares and confounds the minds of others of the saints, and brings them into great difficulties and temptation, and entangles them in a wilderness, out of which they can by no means extricate themselves. By this means, Satan mightily encourages the hearts of open enemies of religion, and strengthens their hands, and fills them with weapons, and makes strong their fortresses; when, at the same time, religion and the church of God lie exposed to them, as a city without walls. By this means, he brings it to pass, that men work wickedness under a notion of doing God service, and so sin without restraint, yea with earnest forwardness and zeal, and with all their might. By this means, he brings in even the friends of religion, insensibly to themselves, to do the work of enemies, by destroying religion in a far more effectual manner than open enemies can do, under a notion of advancing it. By this means the devil scatters the flock of Christ, and sets them one against another, and that with great heat of spirit, under a notion of zeal for God; and religion, by degrees, degenerates into vain jangling; and during the strife, Satan leads both parties far out of the right way, driving each to great extremes, one on the right hand, and the other on the left, according as he finds they are most inclined, or most easily moved and swayed, till the right path in the middle is almost wholly neglected. And in the midst of this confusion, the devil has great opportunity to advance his own interest, and make it strong in ways innumerable, and get the government of all into his own hands, and work his own will. And by what is seen of the terrible consequences of this counterfeit religion, when not distinguished from true religion, God's people in general have their minds unhinged and unsettled, in things of religion and know not where to set their foot, or what to think or do; and many are brought into doubts, whether there be any thing at all in religion; and heresy and infidelity, and atheism greatly prevail.

Therefore it greatly concerns us to use our utmost endeavors clearly to discern, and have it well settled and established, wherein true religion does consist. Till this be done, it may be expected, that great revivings of religion will be but of short continuance: Till this be done, there is but little good to be expected of all our warm debates, in conversation, and from the press, not knowing clearly and distinctly what we ought to contend for.

My design is to contribute my mite, and use my best (however feeble) endeavors to this end, in the ensuing treatise; wherein it must be noted, that my design is somewhat diverse from the design of what I have formerly published, which was to shew the distinguishing marks of a work of the Spirit of God, *including both*

his common and saving operations; but what I aim at now, is to shew the nature and signs of the gracious operations *of God's Spirit, by which they are to be distinguished from all things whatsoever, that the minds of men are the subjects of, which are not of a saving nature. If I have succeeded, in this my aim, in any tolerable measure, I hope it will tend to promote the interest of religion. And whether I have succeeded to bring any light to this subject or no, and however my attempts may be reproached, in these captious and censorious times, I hope in the mercy of a gracious God, for the acceptance of the sincerity of my endeavors; and hope also for the candor and prayers of the true followers of the meek and charitable Lamb of God.*

RELIGIOUS AFFECTIONS.

PART I.

Concerning the Nature of the Affections, and their Importance in Religion.

1 PETER i. 8.

WHOM HAVING NOT SEEN, YE LOVE; IN WHOM, THOUGH NOW YE SEE HIM NOT, YET BELIEVING, YE REJOICE WITH JOY UNSPEAKABLE, AND FULL OF GLORY.

IN these words, the apostle represents the state of the minds of the Christians he wrote to, under the persecutions they were then the subjects of. These persecutions are what he has respect to, in the two preceding verses, when he speaks of *the trial of their faith*, and of *their being in heaviness through manifold temptations.*

Such trials are of threefold benefit to true religion. Hereby the truth of it is manifested, and it appears to be indeed true religion; they, above all other things, have a tendency to distinguish between true religion and false, and to cause the difference between them evidently to appear. Hence they are called by the name of *trials*, in the verse nextly preceding the text, and in innumerable other places; they try the faith and religion of professors, of what sort it is, as apparent gold is tried in the fire, and manifested, whether it be true gold or no. And the faith of true Christians being thus tried and proved to be true, is "found to praise, and honor, and glory," as in that preceding verse.

And then, these trials are of further benefit to true religion; they not only manifest the truth of it, but they make its genuine beauty and amiableness remarkably to appear. True

virtue never appears so lovely, as when it is most oppressed; and the divine excellency of real Christianity, is never exhibited with such advantage, as when under the greatest trials: Then it is that true faith appears much more precious than gold! And upon this account is "found to praise, and honor, and glory."

And again, another benefit that such trials are of to true religion, is, that they purify and increase it. They not only manifest it to be true, but also tend to refine it, and deliver it from those mixtures of that which is false, which encumber and impede it; that nothing may be left but that which is true. They tend to cause the amiableness of true religion to appear to the best advantage, as was before observed; and not only so, but they tend to increase its beauty, by establishing and confirming it, and making it more lively and vigorous, and purifying it from those things that obscured its lustre and glory. As gold that is tried in the fire, is purged from its alloy, and all remainders of dross, and comes forth more solid and beautiful; so true faith being tried as gold is tried in the fire, becomes more precious, and thus also is "found unto praise, and honor, and glory." The apostle seems to have respect to each of these benefits, that persecutions are of to true religion, in the verse preceding the text.

And in the text, the apostle observes how true religion operated in the Christians he wrote to, under their persecutions whereby these benefits of persecution appeared in them; or what manner of operation of true religion, in them, it was, whereby their religion, under persecution, was manifested to be true religion, and eminently appeared in the genuine beauty and amiableness of true religion, and also appeared to be increased and purified, and so was like to be "found unto praise, and honor, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ." And there were two kinds of operation, or exercise of true religion, in them, under their sufferings, that the apostle takes notice of in the text, wherein these benefits appeared.

1. *Love to Christ;* "Whom having not yet seen, ye love." The world was ready to wonder, what strange principle it

was, that influenced them to expose themselves to so great sufferings, to forsake the things that were seen, and renounce all that was dear and pleasant, which was the object of sense. They seemed to the men of the world about them, as though they were beside themselves, and to act as though they hated themselves; there was nothing in their view, that could induce them thus to suffer and support them under, and carry them through such trials. But although there was nothing that was seen, nothing that the world saw, or that the Christians themselves ever saw with their bodily eyes, that thus influenced and supported them, yet they had a supernatural principle of love to something unseen; they loved Jesus Christ, for they saw him spiritually whom the world saw not, and whom they themselves had never seen with bodily eyes.

2. *Joy in Christ.* Though their outward sufferings were very grievous, yet their inward spiritual joys were greater than their sufferings; and these supported them, and enabled them to suffer with cheerfulness.

There are two things which the apostle takes notice of in the text concerning this joy. 1. The manner in which it rises, the way in which Christ, though unseen, is the foundation of it, viz. by faith; which is the evidence of things not seen: "In whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice." 2. The nature of this joy; "unspeakable and full of glory." Unspeakable in the kind of it; very different from worldly joys, and carnal delights; of a vastly more pure, sublime, and heavenly nature, being something supernatural, and truly divine, and so ineffably excellent; the sublimity and exquisite sweetness of which, there were no words to set forth. Unspeakable also in degree; it pleasing God to give them this holy joy, with a liberal hand, and in large measure, in their state of persecution.

Their joy was full of glory. Although the joy was unspeakable, and no words were sufficient to describe it, yet something might be said of it, and no words more fit to represent its excellency than these, that it was *full of glory*; or, as it is in the original, *glorified joy*. In rejoicing with this joy, their minds were filled, as it were, with a glorious brightness,

and their natures exalted and perfected. It was a most worthy, noble rejoicing, that did not corrupt and debase the mind, as many carnal joys do; but did greatly beautify and dignify it; it was a prelibation of the joy of heaven, that raised their minds to a degree of heavenly blessedness; it filled their minds with the light of God's glory, and made themselves to shine with some communication of that glory.

Hence the proposition or doctrine, that I would raise from these words, is this:

DOCTRINE. *True religion, in great part, consists in holy affections.*

We see that the apostle, in observing and remarking the operations and exercises of religion in the Christians he wrote to, wherein their religion appeared to be true and of the right kind, when it had its greatest trial of what sort it was, being tried by persecution as gold is tried in the fire, and when their religion not only proved true, but was most pure, and cleansed from its dross and mixtures of that which was not true, and when religion appeared in them most in its genuine excellency and native beauty, and was found to praise, and honor, and glory; he singles out the religious affections of *love* and *joy*, that were then in exercise in them: These are the exercises of religion he takes notice of, wherein their religion did thus appear true and pure, and in its proper glory.

Here I would,

1. Shew what is intended by the affections.

2. Observe some things which make it evident, that a great part of true religion lies in the affections.

I. It may be inquired, what the affections of the mind are?

I answer....The affections are no other than the more vigorous and sensible exercises of the inclination and will of the soul.

God has endued the soul with two faculties: One is that by which it is capable of perception and speculation, or by which it discerns, and views, and judges of things; which is called the understanding. The other faculty is that by which the soul does not merely perceive and view things, but is some way inclined with respect to the things it views or con-

siders; either is inclined *to* them, or is disinclined and averse *from* them; or is the faculty by which the soul does not behold things, as an indifferent unaffected spectator, but either as liking or disliking, pleased or displeased, approving or rejecting. This faculty is called by various names; it is sometimes called the *inclination:* And, as it has respect to the actions that are determined and governed by it, is called the *will:* And the mind, with regard to the exercises of this faculty, is often called the *heart.*

The exercise of this faculty are of two sorts; either those by which the soul is carried out towards the things that are in view, in approving of them, being pleased with them, and inclined to them; or those in which the soul opposes the things that are in view, in disapproving them, and in being displeased with them, averse from them, and rejecting them.

And as the exercises of the inclination and will of the soul are various in their kinds, so they are much more various in their degrees. There are some exercises of pleasedness or displeasedness, inclination or disinclination, wherein the soul is carried but a little beyond a state of perfect indifference..... And there are other degrees above this, wherein the approbation or dislike, pleasedness or aversion, are stronger, wherein we may rise higher and higher, till the soul comes to act vigorously and sensibly, and the actings of the soul are with that strength, that (through the laws of the union which the Creator has fixed between the soul and body) the motion of the blood and animal spirits begins to be sensibly altered; whence oftentimes arises some bodily sensation, especially about the heart and vitals, that are the fountain of the fluids of the body: From whence it comes to pass, that the mind, with regard to the exercises of this faculty, perhaps in all nations and ages, is called the *heart.* And, it is to be noted, that they are these more vigorous and sensible exercises of this faculty that are called the *affections.*

The will, and the affections of the soul, are not two faculties; the affections are not essentially distinct from the will, nor do they differ from the mere actings of the will, and in-

clination of the soul, but only in the liveliness and sensibleness of exercise.

It must be confessed, that language is here somewhat imperfect, and the meaning of words in a considerable measure loose and unfixed, and not precisely limited by custom, which governs the use of language. In some sense, the affection of the soul differs nothing at all from the will and inclination, and the will never is in any exercise any further than it is affected; it is not moved out of a state of perfect indifference, any otherwise than as it is affected one way or other, and acts nothing any further. But yet there are many actings of the will and inclination, that are not so commonly called *affections*: In every thing we do, wherein we act voluntarily, there is an exercise of the will and inclination, it is our inclination that governs us in our actions; but all the actings of the inclination and will, in all our common actions of life, are not ordinarily called affections. Yet, what are commonly called affections are not essentially different from them, but only in the degree and manner of exercise. In every act of the will whatsoever, the soul either likes or dislikes is either inclined or disinclined to what is in view: These are not essentially different from those affections of love and hatred: That liking or inclination of the soul to a thing, if it be in a high degree, and be vigorous and lively, is the very same thing with the affection of love; and that disliking and disinclining, if in a greater degree, is the very same with hatred. In every act of the will for, or towards something not present, the soul is in some degree inclined to that thing; and that inclination, if in a considerable degree, is the very same with the affection of desire. And in every degree of the act of the will, wherein the soul approves of something present, there is a degree of pleasedness; and that pleasedness, if it be in a considerable degree, is the very same with the affection of joy or delight. And if the will disapproves of what is present, the soul is in some degree displeased, and if that displeasedness be great, it is the very same with the affection of grief or sorrow.

Such seems to be our nature and such the laws of the union of soul and body, that there never is, in any case whatsoever, any lively and vigorous exercise of the will or inclination of the soul, without some effect upon the body, in some alteration of the motion of its fluids, and especially of the animal spirits. And, on the other hand, from the same laws of the union of soul and body, the constitution of the body, and the motion of its fluids, may promote the exercise of the affections. But yet it is not the body, but the mind only, that is the proper seat of the affections. The body of man is no more capable of being really the subject of love or hatred, joy or sorrow, fear or hope, than the body of a tree, or than the same body of man is capable of thinking and understanding. As it is the soul only that has ideas, so it is the soul only that is pleased or displeased with its ideas. As it is the soul only that thinks, so it is the soul only that loves or hates, rejoices or is grieved at what it thinks of. Nor are these motions of the animal spirits, and fluids of the body, any thing properly belonging to the nature of the affections, though they always accompany them, in the present state; but are only effects or concomitants of the affections that are entirely distinct from the affections themselves, and no way essential to them; so that an unbodied spirit may be as capable of love and hatred, joy or sorrow, hope or fear, or other affections, as one that is united to a body.

The affections and passions are frequently spoken of as the same; and yet in the more common use of speech, there is in some respect a difference; and affection is a word, that in its ordinary signification, seems to be something more extensive than passion, being used for all vigorous lively actings of the will or inclination; but passion for those that are more sudden, and whose effects on the animal spirits are more violent, and the mind more overpowered, and less in its own command.

As all the exercises of the inclination and will, are either in approving and liking, or disapproving and rejecting; so the affections are of two sorts; they are those by which the

soul is carried out to what is in view, cleaving to it, or seeking it; or those by which it is averse from it, and opposes it.

Of the former sort, are love, desire, hope, joy, gratitude, complacence. Of the latter kind, are hatred, fear, anger, grief, and such like; which it is needless now to stand particularly to define.

And there are some affections wherein there is a composition of each of the aforementioned kinds of actings of the will; as in the affection of *pity*, there is something of the former kind, towards the person suffering, and something of the latter towards what he suffers. And so in zeal, there is in it high approbation of some person or thing, together with vigorous opposition to what is conceived to be contrary to it.

There are other mixed affections that might be also mentioned, but I hasten to,

II. The second thing proposed, which was, to observe some things that render it evident, that true religion, in great part consists in the affections. And here,

1. What has been said of the nature of the affections makes this evident, and may be sufficient, without adding any thing further, to put this matter out of doubt; for who will deny that true religion consists in a great measure, in vigorous and lively actings of the inclination and will of the soul, or the fervent exercises of the heart?

That religion which God requires, and will accept, does not consist in weak, dull, and lifeless wouldings, raising us but a little above a state of indifference: God, in his word, greatly insists upon it, that we be good in earnest, "fervent in spirit," and our hearts vigorously engaged in religion: Rom. xii. 11. "Be ye fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." Deut. x. 12. And now "Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul?" And chap. vi. 4, 5. "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." It is such a fervent, vig-

orous engagedness of the heart in religion, that is the fruit of a real circumcision of the heart, or true regeneration, and that has the promises of life; Deut. xxx. 6. "And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live."

If we be not in good earnest in religion, and our wills and inclinations be not strongly exercised, we are nothing. The things of religion are so great, that there can be no suitableness in the exercises of our hearts, to their nature and importance, unless they be lively and powerful. In nothing is vigor in the actings of our inclinations so requisite, as in religion; and in nothing is lukewarmness so odious. True religion is evermore a powerful thing; and the power of it appears, in the first place in the inward exercises of it in the heart, where is the principal and original seat of it. Hence true religion is called the *power of godliness*, in distinction from the external appearances of it, that are the *form* of it, 2 Tim. iii. 5. "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power of it." The Spirit of God, in those that have sound and solid religion, is a spirit of powerful holy affection; and therefore, God is said "to have given the Spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind," 2 Tim. i. 7. And such, when they receive the Spirit of God, in his sanctifying and saving influences, are said to be "baptized with the Holy Ghost, and with fire;" by reason of the power and fervor of those exercises the Spirit of God excites in their hearts, whereby their hearts when grace is in exercise, may be said to "burn within them;" as is said of the disciples, Luke xxiv. 32.

The business of religion is from time to time compared to those exercises, wherein men are wont to have their hearts and strength greatly exercised and engaged, such as running, wrestling or agonizing for a great prize or crown, and fighting with strong enemies that seek our lives, and warring as those, that by violence take a city or kingdom.

And though true grace has various degrees, and there are some that are but babes in Christ, in whom the exercise of

of the inclination and will, towards divine and heavenly things, is comparatively weak; yet every one that has the power of godliness in his heart, has his inclinations and heart exercised towards God and divine things, with such strength and vigor that these holy exercises do prevail in him above all carnal or natural affections, and are effectual to overcome them: For every true disciple of Christ "loves him above father or mother, wife and children, brethren and sisters, houses and lands: Yea, than his own life." From hence it follows, that wherever true religion is, there are vigorous exercises of the inclination and will towards divine objects: But by what was said before, the vigorous, lively, and sensible exercises of the will, are no other than the affections of the soul.

2. The Author of the human nature has not only given affections to men, but has made them very much the spring of men's actions. As the affections do not only necessarily belong to the human nature, but are a very great part of it; so inasmuch as by regeneration, (persons are renewed in the whole man, and sanctified throughout) holy affections do not only necessarily belong to true religion, but are a very great part of it. And as true religion is of a practical nature, and God hath so constituted the human nature, that the affections are very much the spring of men's actions, this also shews, that true religion must consist very much in the affections.

Such is man's nature, that he is very unactive, any otherwise than he is influenced by some affection, either love or hatred, desire, hope, fear, or some other. These affections we see to be the springs that set men a going, in all the affairs of life, and engage them in all their pursuits: These are the things that put men forward, and carry them along, in all their worldly business; and especially are men excited and animated by these, in all affairs wherein they are earnestly engaged, and which they pursue with vigor. We see the world of mankind to be exceeding busy and active; and the affections of men are the springs of the motion: Take away all love and hatred, all hope and fear, all anger, zeal, and affectionate desire, and the world would be, in a great

measure, motionless and dead; there would be no such thing as activity amongst mankind, or any earnest pursuit whatsoever. It is affection that engages the covetous man, and him that is greedy of worldly profits, in his pursuits; and it is by the affections, that the ambitious man is put forward in his pursuit of worldly glory; and it is the affections also that actuate the voluptuous man, in his pursuit of pleasure and sensual delights: The world continues, from age to age in a continual commotion and agitation, in a pursuit of these things; but take away all affection, and the spring of all this motion would be gone, and the motion itself would cease. And as in worldly things, worldly affections are very much the spring of men's motion and action; so in religious matters, the spring of their actions is very much religious affection: He that has doctrinal knowledge and speculation only, without affection, never is engaged in the business of religion.

3. Nothing is more manifest in fact, than that the things of religion take hold of men's souls, no further than they affect them. There are multitudes that often hear the word of God, and therein hear of those things that are infinitely great and important, and that most nearly concern them, and all that is heard seems to be wholly ineffectual upon them, and to make no alteration in their disposition or behavior; and the reason is, they are not affected with what they hear. There are many that often hear of the glorious perfections of God, his almighty power and boundless wisdom, his infinite majesty, and that holiness of God, by which he is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity, and the heavens are not pure in his sight, and of God's infinite goodness and mercy, and hear of the great works of God's wisdom, power and goodness, wherein there appear the admirable manifestations of these perfections; they hear particularly of the unspeakable love of God and Christ, and of the great things that Christ has done and suffered, and of the great things of another world, of eternal misery in bearing the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God, and of endless blessedness and glory in the presence of God, and the enjoyment of his dear love; they also hear the peremptory commands of God, and his

gracious counsels and warnings, and the sweet invitations of the gospel; I say, they often hear these things and yet remain as they were before, with no sensible alteration in them, either in heart or practice, because they are not affected with what they hear; and ever will be so till they are affected..... I am bold to assert, that there never was any considerable change wrought in the mind or conversation of any person, by any thing of a religious nature, that ever he read, heard or saw, that had not his affections moved. Never was a natural man engaged earnestly to seek his salvation; never were any such brought to cry after wisdom, and lift up their voice for understanding, and to wrestle with God in prayer for mercy; and never was one humbled, and brought to the foot of God, from any thing that ever he heard or imagined of his own unworthiness and deserving of God's displeasure; nor was ever one induced to fly for refuge unto Christ, while his heart remained unaffected. Nor was there ever a saint awakened out of a cold, lifeless frame, or recovered from a declining state in religion, and brought back from a lamentable departure from God, without having his heart affected. And in a word, there never was any thing considerable brought to pass in the heart or life of any man living, by the things of religion, that had not his heart deeply affected by those things.

4. The holy scriptures do every where place religion very much in the affections; such as fear, hope, love, hatred, desire, joy, sorrow, gratitude, compassion, and zeal.

The scriptures place much of religion in godly fear; insomuch, that it is often spoken of as the character of those that are truly religious persons, that they tremble at God's word, that they fear before him, that their flesh trembles for fear of him, and that they are afraid of his judgments, that his excellency makes them afraid, and his dread falls upon them, and the like: And a compellation commonly given the saints in scripture, is "fearers of God," or, "they that fear the Lord." And because the fear of God is a great part of true godliness, hence true godliness in general, is very commonly called by the name of *the fear of God*; as every one knows, that knows any thing of the Bible.

So hope in God and in the promises of his word, is often spoken of in the scripture, as a very considerable part of true religion. It is mentioned as one of the three great things of which religion consists, 1 Cor. xiii. 13. Hope in the Lord is also frequently mentioned as the character of the saints: Psal. cxlvi. 5. "Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God." Jer. xvii. 7. "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is." Psal. xxxi. 24. "Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord." And the like in many other places. Religious fear and hope are, once and again, joined together, as jointly constituting the character of the true saints; Psal. xxxiii. 18. "Behold the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy." Psal. cxlvii. 11. "The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy." Hope is so great a part of true religion, that the apostle says, "we are saved by hope," Rom. viii. 24. And this is spoken of as the helmet of the Christian soldier. 1 Thes. v. 8. "And for an helmet, the *hope* of salvation;" and the sure and stedfast anchor of the soul, which preserves it from being cast away by the storms of this evil world. Heb. vi. 19. "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the vail." It is spoken of as a great fruit and benefit which true saints receive by Christ's resurrection, 1 Pet. i. 3. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

The scriptures place religion very much in the affection of *love*, in love to God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and love to the people of God, and to mankind. The texts in which this is manifest, both in the Old Testament and New, are innumerable. But of this more afterwards.

The contrary affection of *hatred* also, as having sin for its object, is spoken of in scripture as no inconsiderable part of true religion. It is spoken of as that by which true religion

may be known and distinguished, Prov. viii. 13. "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil." And accordingly the saints are called upon to give evidence of their sincerity by this, Psal. xcvii. 10. "Ye that love the Lord hate evil." And the Psalmist often mentions it as an evidence of his sincerity; Psal. ci. 2, 3. "I will walk within my house with a perfect heart. I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes; I hate the work of them that turn aside." Psal. cxix. 104. "I hate every false way." So ver. 128. Again, Psal. cxxxix. 21. "Do I not hate them, O Lord, that hate thee?"

So holy desire, exercised in longings, hungerings, and thirstings after God and holiness, is often mentioned in scripture as an important part of true religion; Isa. xxvi. 8. "The desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee." Psal. xxvii. 4. "One thing have I desired of the Lord, and that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple." Psal. xlii. 1, 2. "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God; my soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: When shall I come and appear before God?" Psal. lxiii. 1, 2. "My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary." Psal. lxxxiv. 1, 2. "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: My heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God." Psal. cxix. 20. "My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times." So Psal. lxxiii. 25, and cxliii. 6, 7. and cxxx. 6. Cant. iii. 1, 2, and vi. 8. Such a holy desire and thirst of soul is mentioned, as one thing which renders or denotes a man truly blessed, in the beginning of Christ's sermon on the mount, Mat. v. 6. "Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled." And this holy thirst is spoken of, as a great thing in the condition of a participation of the blessings of eternal life, Rev. xxi. 6. "I will give

unto him that is athirst, of the fountain of the water of life freely."

The scriptures speak of holy joy, as a great part of true religion. So it is represented in the text. And as an important part of religion, it is often exhorted to, and pressed, with great earnestness; Psal. xxxvii. 4. "Delight thyself in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart." Psal. xcvii. 12. "Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous." So Psal. xxxiii. 1. "Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous." Mat. v. 12. "Rejoice, and be exceeding glad." Phil. iii. 1. "Finally, brethren, rejoice in the Lord." And chap. iv. 4. "Rejoice in the Lord alway; and again, I say, Rejoice." 1 Thes. v. 16. "Rejoice evermore." Psal. cxlix. 2. "Let Israel rejoice in him that made him; let the children of Zion be joyful in their King." This is mentioned among the principal fruits of the Spirit of grace, Gal. v. 22. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy," &c. The Psalmist mentions his holy joy, as an evidence of his sincerity. Psal. cxix. 14. "I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches."

Religious sorrow, mourning, and brokenness of heart, are also frequently spoken of as a great part of true religion. These things are often mentioned as distinguishing qualities of the true saints, and a great part of their character; Mat. v. 4. "Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted." Psal. xxxiv. 18. "The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit." Isa. lxi. 1, 2. "The Lord hath anointed me....to bind up the broken hearted, to comfort all that mourn." This godly sorrow and brokenness of heart is often spoken of, not only as a great thing in the distinguishing character of the saints, but that in them, which is peculiarly acceptable and pleasing to God; Psal. li. 17. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." Isa. lvii. 15. "Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place; with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble,

and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Chap. lxvi. 2. "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit."

Another affection often mentioned, as that in the exercise of which much of true religion appears, is *gratitude*; especially as exercised in thankfulness and praise to God. This being so much spoken of in the book of Psalms, and other parts of the holy scriptures, I need not mention particular texts.

Again, the holy scriptures do frequently speak of compassion or mercy, as a very great and essential thing in true religion; insomuch that good men are in scripture denominated from hence; and a merciful man, and a good man, are equivalent terms in scripture, Isa. lvii. 1. "The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart; and merciful men are taken away." And the scripture chooses out this quality, as that by which, in a peculiar manner, a righteous man is decyphered; Psal. xxxvii. 21. "The righteous sheweth mercy, and giveth;" and ver. 26. "He is ever merciful, and lendeth." And Prov. xiv. 31. "He that honoreth the Lord, hath mercy on the poor." And Col. iii. 12. "Put ye on, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies," &c. This is one of those great things by which those who are truly blessed are described by our Saviour, Mat. v. 7. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." And this Christ also speaks of, as one of the weightier matters of the law, Mat. xxiii. 23. "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye pay tithe of mint, and anise, and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith." To the like purpose is that, Mic. vi. 8. "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good: And what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justice, and love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God?" And also that, Hos. vi. 6. "For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice." Which seems to have been a text much delighted in by our Saviour, by his manner of citing it once and again, Mat. ix. 13, and xii. 7.

Zeal is also spoken of, as a very essential part of the religion of true saints. It is spoken of as a great thing Christ had

in view, in giving himself for our redemption, Tit. ii. 14. "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." And this is spoken of, as the great thing wanting in the lukewarm Laodiceans, Rev. iii. 15, 16, 19.

I have mentioned but a few texts, out of an innumerable multitude, all over the scripture, which place religion very much in the affections. But what has been observed, may be sufficient to shew that they who would deny that much of true religion lies in the affections, and maintain the contrary, must throw away what we have been wont to own for our Bible, and get some other rule, by which to judge of the nature of religion.

5. The scriptures do represent true religion, as being summarily comprehended in love, the chief of the affections, and fountain of all other affections.

So our blessed Saviour represents the matter, in answer to the lawyer, who asked him, which was the great commandment of the law, Mat. xxii. 37.....40. "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." Which last words signify as much, as that these two commandments comprehend all the duty prescribed, and the religion taught in the law and the prophets. And the apostle Paul does from time to time make the same representation of the matter; as in Rom. xiii. 8. "He that loveth another, hath fulfilled the law." And ver. 10. "Love is the fulfilling of the law." And Gal. v. 14. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." So likewise in 1 Tim. i. 5. "Now the end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart," &c. So the same apostle speaks of love, as the greatest thing in religion, and as the vitals, essence and soul of it; without which, the greatest knowledge and gifts, and the most glaring profession, and every thing else which ap-

pertains to religion, are vain and worthless; and represents it as the fountain from whence proceeds all that is good, in 1 Cor. xiii. throughout; for that which is there rendered *charity*, in the original is αγαπη, the proper English of which is *love*.

Now, although it be true, that the love thus spoken of includes the whole of a sincerely benevolent propensity of the soul towards God and man; yet it may be considered, that it is evident from what has been before observed, that this propensity or inclination of the soul, when in sensible and vigorous exercise, becomes affection, and is no other than affectionate love. And surely it is such vigorous and fervent love which Christ speaks of, as the sum of all religion, when he speaks of loving God with all our hearts, with all our souls, and with all our minds, and our neighbor as ourselves, as the sum of all that was taught and prescribed in the law and the prophets.

Indeed it cannot be supposed, when this affection of love is here, and in other scriptures, spoken of as the sum of all religion, that hereby is meant the act, exclusive of the habit, or that the exercise of the understanding is excluded, which is implied in all reasonable affection. But it is doubtless true, and evident from these scriptures, that the essence of all true religion lies in holy love; and that in this divine affection, and an habitual disposition to it, and that light which is the foundation of it, and those things which are the fruits of it, consists the whole of religion.

From hence it clearly and certainly appears, that great part of true religion consists in the affections. For love is not only one of the affections, but it is the first and chief of the affections, and the fountain of all the affections. From love arises hatred of those things which are contrary to what we love, or which oppose and thwart us in those things that we delight in: And from the various exercises of love and hatred, according to the circumstances of the objects of these affections, as present or absent, certain or uncertain, probable or improbable, arise all those other affections of desire, hope, fear, joy, grief, gratitude, anger, &c. From a vigorous, affectionate,

and fervent love to God, will necessarily arise other religious affections; hence will arise an intense hatred and abhorrence of sin, fear of sin, and a dread of God's displeasure, gratitude to God for his goodness, complacence and joy in God, when God is graciously and sensibly present, and grief when he is absent, and a joyful hope when a future enjoyment of God is expected, and fervent zeal for the glory of God. And in like manner, from a fervent love to men, will arise all other virtuous affections towards men.

6. The religion of the most eminent saints we have an account of in the scripture, consisted much in holy affections.

I shall take particular notice of three eminent saints, who have expressed the frame and sentiments of their own hearts, and so described their own religion, and the manner of their intercourse with God, in the writings which they have left us, that are a part of the sacred canon.

The first instance I shall take notice of, is David, that "man after God's own heart;" who has given us a lively portraiture of his religion in the Book of Psalms. Those holy songs of his he has there left us, are nothing else but the expressions and breathings of devout and holy affections; such as an humble and fervent love to God, admiration of his glorious perfections and wonderful works, earnest desires, thirstings, and pantings of soul after God, delight and joy in God, a sweet and melting gratitude to God, for his great goodness, an holy exultation and triumph of soul in the favor, sufficiency, and faithfulness of God, his love to, and delight in the saints, the excellent of the earth, his great delight in the word and ordinances of God, his grief for his own and others sins, and his fervent zeal for God, and against the enemies of God and his church. And these expressions of holy affection, which the psalms of David are every where full of, are the more to our present purpose, because those psalms are not only the expressions of the religion of so eminent a saint, that God speaks of as so agreeable to his mind; but were also, by the direction of the Holy Ghost, penned for the use of the church of God in its public worship, not only in that age, but in after ages; as being fitted to express the religion of all saints, in

all ages, as well as the religion of the Psalmist. And it is moreover to be observed, that David, in the book of Psalms, speaks not as a private person, but as the Psalmist of Israel, as the subordinate head of the church of God, and leader in their worship and praises; and in many of the Psalms speaks in the name of Christ, as personating him in these breathings forth of holy affection; and in many other Psalms he speaks in the name of the church.

Another instance I shall observe, is the apostle Paul; who was, in many respects, the chief of all the ministers of the New Testament; being above all others, a chosen vessel unto Christ, to bear his name before the Gentiles, and made a chief instrument of propagating and establishing the Christian church in the world, and of distinctly revealing the glorious mysteries of the gospel, for the instruction of the church in all ages; and (as has not been improbably thought by some) the most eminent servant of Christ that ever lived, received to the highest rewards in the heavenly kingdom of his Master. By what is said of him in the scripture, he appears to have been a person that was full of affection. And it is very manifest, that the religion he expresses in his epistles, consisted very much in holy affections. It appears by all his expressions of himself, that he was, in the course of his life, inflamed, actuated, and entirely swallowed up, by a most ardent love to his glorious Lord, esteeming all things as loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of him, and esteeming them but dung that he might win him. He represents himself, as overpowered by this holy affection, and as it were, compelled by it to go forward in his service, through all difficulties and sufferings, 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. And his epistles are full of expressions of an overflowing affection towards the people of Christ: He speaks of his dear love to them, 2 Cor. xii. 19. Phil. iv. 1. 2 Tim. i. 2; of his "abundant love," 2 Cor. ii. 4; and of his "affectionate and tender love," as of a nurse towards her children, 1 Thess. ii. 7, 8. "But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children; so, being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, be-

cause ye were dear unto us." So also he speaks of his "bowels of love," Phil. i. 8. Philem. 5, 12, and 20. So he speaks of his "earnest care" for others, 2 Cor. viii. 16, and of his "bowels of pity, or mercy towards them, Phil. ii. 1; and of his concern for others, even to anguish of heart," 2 Cor. ii. 4. "For out of much affliction and anguish of heart, I wrote unto you with many tears; not that you should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you." He speaks of the great conflict of his soul for them, Col. ii. 1. He speaks of great and continual grief that he had in his heart from compassion to the Jews, Rom. ix. 2. He speaks of "his mouth's being opened, and his heart enlarged" towards Christians, 2 Cor. vi. 11. "O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged." He often speaks of his "affectionate and longing desires," 1 Thess. ii. 8. Rom. i. 11. Phil. i. 8, and Chap. iv. 1. 2 Tim. i. 4. The same apostle is very often, in his epistles, expressing the affection of *joy*, 2 Cor. i. 12, and Chap. vii. 7, and ver. 9. 16. Phil. i. 4, and Chap. ii. 12. and Chap. iii. 3. Col. i. 24. 1 Thess. iii. 9. He speaks of his "rejoicing with great joy," Phil. iv. 10. Philem. i. 7; of his "joying and rejoicing," Phil. ii. 1. 7, and "of his rejoicing exceedingly," 2 Cor. vii. 13, and of his being "filled with comfort, and being exceeding joyful," 2 Cor. vii. 4. He speaks of himself as "always rejoicing," 2 Cor. vi. 10. So he speaks of the triumphs of his soul, 2 Cor. ii. 14, and of "his glorying in tribulation," 2 Thess. i. 4, and Rom. v. 3. He also expresses the affection of *hope*; in Phil. i. 20, he speaks of his "earnest expectation, and his hope." He likewise expresses an affection of *godly jealousy*, 2 Cor. xi. 2, 3. And it appears by his whole history, after his conversion, in the Acts, and also by all his epistles, and the accounts he gives of himself there, that the affection of *zeal*, as having the cause of his Master, and the interest and prosperity of his church, for its object, was mighty in him, continually inflaming his heart, strongly engaging to those great and constant labors he went through, in instructing, exhorting, warning, and reproving others, "travailing in birth with them;" conflicting with

those powerful and innumerable enemies who continually opposed him, wrestling with principalities and powers, not fighting as one who beats the air, running the race set before him, continually pressing forwards through all manner of difficulties and sufferings; so that others thought him quite beside himself. And how full he was of affection, does further appear by his being so full of tears: In 2 Cor. ii. 4, he speaks of his "many tears;" and so Acts xx. 19; and of his "tears that he shed continually night and day," ver. 31.

Now if any one can consider these accounts given in the scripture of this great apostle, and which he gives of himself, and yet not see that his religion consisted much in affection, must have a strange faculty of managing his eyes, to shut out the light which shines most full in his face.

The other instance I shall mention, is of the apostle John, that beloved disciple, who was the nearest and dearest to his Master, of any of the twelve, and was by him admitted to the greatest privileges of any of them; being not only one of the three who were admitted to be present with him in the mount at his transfiguration, and at the raising of Jairus's daughter, and whom he took with him when he was in his agony, and one of the three spoken of by the apostle Paul, as the three main pillars of the Christian church; but was favored above all, in being admitted to lean on his Master's bosom at his last supper, and in being chosen by Christ, as the disciple to whom he would reveal his wonderful dispensations towards his church, to the end of time; as we have an account in the Book of Revelation; and to shut up the canon of the New Testament, and of the whole scripture; being preserved much longer than all the rest of the apostles, to set all things in order in the Christian church, after their death.

It is evident by all his writings (as is generally observed by divines) that he was a person remarkably full of affection: His addresses to those whom he wrote to, being inexpressibly tender and pathetical, breathing nothing but the most fervent love; as though he were all made up of sweet and holy affection. The proofs of which cannot be given without disadvantage, unless we should transcribe his whole writings.

7. He whom God sent into the world to be the light of the world, and head of the whole church, and the perfect example of true religion and virtue, for the imitation of all, the Shepherd whom the whole flock should follow wherever he goes, even the Lord Jesus Christ was a person who was remarkably of a tender and affectionate heart; and his virtue was expressed very much in the exercise of holy affections. He was the greatest instance of ardency, vigor and strength of love, to both God and man, that ever was. It was these affections which got the victory, in that mighty struggle and conflict of his affections, in his agonies, when "he prayed more earnestly, and offered strong crying and tears," and wrestled in tears and in blood. Such was the power of the exercises of his holy love, that they were stronger than death, and in that great struggle, overcame those strong exercises of the natural affections of fear and grief, when he was sore amazed, and his soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. And he also appeared to be full of affection in the course of his life. We read of his great zeal, fulfilling that in the 69th psalm, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." John ii. 17. We read of his grief for the sins of men, Mark iii. 5. "He looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts;" and his breaking forth in tears and exclamations, from the consideration of the sin and misery of ungodly men, and on the sight of the city of Jerusalem, which was full of such inhabitants, Luke xix. 41, 42. "And, when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes." With chap. xiii. 34. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not?" We read of Christ's earnest desire, Luke xxii. 15. "With desire have I desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer." We often read of the affection of pity or compassion in Christ, Matth. xv. 32, and xviii. 34. Luke vii. 13, and of

his "being moved with compassion," Matth. ix. 36, and xiv. 14, and Mark vi. 34. And how tender did his heart appear to be, on occasion of Mary's and Martha's mourning for their brother, and coming to him with their complaints and tears? Their tears soon drew tears from his eyes; he was affected with their grief, and wept with them; though he knew their sorrow should so soon be turned into joy, by their brother's being raised from the dead; see John xi. And how ineffably affectionate was that last and dying discourse, which Jesus had with his eleven disciples the evening before he was crucified; when he told them he was going away, and foretold them the great difficulties and sufferings they should meet with in the world, when he was gone; and comforted and counselled them as his dear little children; and bequeathed to them his Holy Spirit, and therein his peace, and his comfort and joy, as it were in his last will and testament, in the 13, 14, 15, and 16 chapters of John; and concluded the whole with that affectionate intercessory prayer for them, and his whole church, in chap. xvii. Of all the discourses ever penned, or uttered by the mouth of any man, this seems to be the most affectionate and affecting.

8. The religion of heaven consists very much in affection.

There is doubtless true religion in heaven, and true religion in its utmost purity and perfection. But according to the scripture representation of the heavenly state, the religion of heaven consists chiefly in holy and mighty love and joy, and the expression of these in most fervent and exalted praises. So that the religion of the saints in heaven, consists in the same things with that religion of the saints on earth, which is spoken of in our text, viz. love, and "joy unspeakable and full of glory." Now it would be very foolish to pretend, that because the saints in heaven be not united to flesh and blood, and have no animal fluids to be moved (through the laws of union, of soul and body) with those great emotions of their souls, that therefore their exceeding love and joy are no affections. We are not speaking of the affections of the body, but of the affections of the soul, the chief of which are *love*

and *joy*. When these are in the soul, whether that be in the body or out of it, the soul is affected and moved. And when they are in the soul, in that strength in which they are in the saints in heaven, the soul is mightily affected and moved, or, which is the same thing, has great affections. It is true, we do not experimentally know what love and joy are in a soul out of a body, or in a glorified body; i. e. we have not had experience of love and joy in a soul in these circumstances; but the saints on earth do know what divine love and joy in the soul are, and they know that love and joy are of the same kind with the love and joy which are in heaven, in separate souls there. The love and joy of the saints on earth, is the beginning and dawning of the light, life, and blessedness of heaven, and is like their love and joy there; or rather, the same in nature, though not the same with it, or like to it, in degree and circumstances. This is evident by many scriptures, as Prov. iv. 18. John iv. 14, and chap. vi. 40, 47, 50, 51, 54, 58. 1 John iii. 15. 1 Cor. xiii. 8....12. It is unreasonable therefore to suppose, that the love and joy of the saints in heaven, not only differ in degree and circumstances, from the holy love and joy of the saints on earth, but is so entirely different in nature, that they are no affections; and merely because they have no blood and animal spirits to be set in motion by them, which motion of the blood and animal spirits is not of the essence of these affections, in men on the earth, but the effect of them; although by their reaction they may make some circumstantial difference in the sensation of the mind. There is a sensation of the mind which loves and rejoices, that is antecedent to any effects on the fluids of the body; and this sensation of the mind, therefore, does not depend on these motions in the body, and so may be in the soul without the body. And wherever there are the exercises of love and joy, there is that sensation of the mind, whether it be in the body or out; and that inward sensation, or kind of spiritual sense, or feeling, and motion of the soul, is what is called affection: The soul when it thus feels, (if I may say so) and is thus moved, is said to be affected, and especially when this inward sensation and motion are to a very high

degree, as they are in the saints in heaven. If we can learn any thing of the state of heaven from the scripture, the love and joy that the saints have there, is exceeding great and vigorous; impressing the heart with the strongest and most lively sensation of inexpressible sweetness, mightily moving, animating, and engaging them, making them like to a flame of fire. And if such love and joy be not affections, then the word *affection* is of no use in language. Will any say, that the saints in heaven, in beholding the face of their Father, and the glory of their Redeemer, and contemplating his wonderful works, and particularly his laying down his life for them, have their hearts nothing moved and affected by all which they behold or consider?

Hence, therefore, the religion of heaven, consisting chiefly in holy love and joy, consists very much in affection; and therefore, undoubtedly, true religion consists very much in affection. The way to learn the true nature of any thing, is to go where that thing is to be found in its purity and perfection. If we would know the nature of true gold, we must view it, not in the ore, but when it is refined. If we would learn what true religion is, we must go where there is true religion, and nothing but true religion, and in its highest perfection, without any defect or mixture. All who are truly religious are not of this world, they are strangers here, and belong to heaven; they are born from above, heaven is their native country, and the nature which they receive by this heavenly birth, is an heavenly nature, they receive an anointing from above; that principle of true religion which is in them, is a communication of the religion of heaven; their grace is the dawn of glory; and God fits them for that world by conforming them to it.

9. This appears from the nature and design of the ordinances and duties, which God hath appointed, as means and expressions of true religion.

To instance in the duty of prayer: It is manifest, we are not appointed in this duty, to declare God's perfections, his majesty, holiness, goodness, and allsufficiency, and our own meanness, emptiness, dependence, and unworthiness, and our

wants and desires, to inform God of these things, or to incline his heart, and prevail with him to be willing to shew us mercy; but suitably to affect our own hearts with the things we express, and so to prepare us to receive the blessings we ask. And such gestures and manner of external behavior in the worship of God, which custom has made to be significations of humility and reverence, can be of no further use than as they have some tendency to affect our own hearts, or the hearts of others.

And the duty of singing praises to God seems to be appointed wholly to excite and express religious affections. No other reason can be assigned why we should express ourselves to God in verse, rather than in prose, and do it with music, but only, that such is our nature and frame, that these things have a tendency to move our affections.

The same thing appears in the nature and design of the sacraments, which God hath appointed. God, considering our frame, hath not only appointed that we should be told of the great things of the gospel, and of the redemption of Christ, and instructed in them by his word; but also that they should be, as it were, exhibited to our view, in sensible representations, in the sacraments, the more to affect us with them.

And the impressing divine things on the hearts and affections of men, is evidently one great and main end for which God has ordained, that his word delivered in the holy scriptures, should be opened, applied, and set home upon men, in preaching. And therefore it does not answer the aim which God had in this institution, merely for men to have good commentaries and expositions on the scripture, and other good books of divinity; because although these may tend, as well as preaching, to give men a good doctrinal or speculative understanding, of the things of the word of God, yet they have not an equal tendency to impress them on men's hearts and affections. God hath appointed a particular and lively application of his word to men, in the preaching of it, as a fit means to affect sinners with the importance of the things of religion, and their own misery, and necessity of a remedy, and the glory and sufficiency of a remedy provided;

and to stir up the pure minds of the saints, and quicken their affections, by often bringing the great things of religion to their remembrance, and setting them before them in their proper colors, though they know them, and have been fully instructed in them already, 2 Pet. i. 12, 13. And particularly, to promote those two affections in them, which are spoken of in the text, love and joy: "Christ gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; that the body of Christ might be edified in love," Eph. iv. 11, 12, 16. The apostle, in instructing and counselling Timothy concerning the work of the ministry, informs him that the great end of that word which a minister is to preach, is love or charity, 1 Tim. i. 3, 4, 5. And another affection which God has appointed preaching as a means to promote in the saints, is joy; and therefore ministers are called "helpers of their joy," 2 Cor. i. 24.

10. It is an evidence that true religion, or holiness of heart, lies very much in the affection of the heart, that the scriptures place the sin of the heart very much in hardness of heart. Thus the scriptures do every where. It was hardness of heart which excited grief and displeasure in Christ towards the Jews, Mark iii. 5. "He looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts." It is from men's having such a heart as this, that they treasure up wrath for themselves, Rom. ii. 5. "After thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God." The reason given why the house of Israel would not obey God, was, that they were hard-hearted, Ezekiel iii. 7. "But the house of Israel will not hearken unto thee; for they will not hearken unto me: For all the house of Israel are impudent and hard hearted." The wickedness of that perverse rebellious generation in the wilderness, is ascribed to the hardness of their hearts, Psal. xcv. 7.....10. "To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness; when your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work: Forty years long was I

grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their heart," &c. This is spoken of as what prevented Zedekiah's turning to the Lord, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 13. "He stiffened his neck, and hardened his heart from turning to the Lord God of Israel." This principle is spoken of, as that from whence men are without the fear of God, and depart from God's ways: Isa. lxiii. 17. "O Lord, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways? And hardened our heart from thy fear?" And men's rejecting Christ, and opposing Christianity, is laid to this principle, Acts xix. 9. "But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude." God's leaving men to the power of the sin and corruption of the heart, is often expressed by God's hardening their hearts, Rom. ix. 18. "Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth." John xii. 40. "He hath blinded their minds, and hardened their hearts." And the apostle seems to speak of "an evil heart that departs from the living God, and a hard heart," as the same thing, Heb. iii. 8. "Harden not your heart, as in the provocation," &c. ver. 12, 13. "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God: But exhort one another daily, while it is called today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." And that great work of God in conversion, which consists in delivering a person from the power of sin, and mortifying corruption, is expressed, once and again, by God's "taking away the heart of stone, and giving an heart of flesh," Ezek. xi. 19, and chap. xxxvi. 26.

Now by a hard heart, is plainly meant an unaffected heart, or a heart not easy to be moved with virtuous affections, like a stone, insensible, stupid, unmoved, and hard to be impressed. Hence the hard heart is called a *stony heart*, and is opposed to an heart of flesh, that has feeling, and is sensibly touched and moved. We read in scripture of a hard heart, and a tender heart; and doubtless we are to understand these, as contrary the one to the other. But what is a tender heart, but a heart which is easily impressed with what ought to affect it? God commends Josiah, because his heart was tender;

and it is evident by those things which are mentioned as expressions and evidences of this tenderness of heart, that by his heart being tender is meant, his heart being easily moved with religious and pious affection, 2 Kings xxii. 19. "Because thine heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before the Lord, when thou heardst what I spake against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and hast rent thy clothes, and wept before me, I also have heard thee, saith the Lord." And this is one thing, wherein it is necessary we should "become as little children in order to our entering into the kingdom of God," even that we should have our hearts tender, and easily affected and moved in spiritual and divine things, as little children have in other things.

It is very plain in some places, in the texts themselves, that by hardness of heart is meant a heart void of affection. So, to signify the Ostrich's being without natural affection to her young, it is said, Job xxxix. 16. "She hardeneth her heart against her young ones, as though they were not hers." So a person having a heart unaffected in time of danger, is expressed by his hardening his heart, Prov. xxviii. 14. "Happy is the man that feareth alway; but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief."

Now, therefore, since it is so plain, that by a hard heart, in scripture, is meant a heart destitute of pious affections, and since also the scriptures do so frequently place the sin and corruption of the heart in hardness of heart; it is evident, that the grace and holiness of the heart, on the contrary, must, in a great measure, consist in its having pious affections, and being easily susceptive of such affection. Divines are generally agreed, that sin radically and fundamentally consists in what is negative, or privative, having its root and foundation in a privation or want of holiness. And therefore undoubtedly, if it be so that sin does very much consist in hardness of heart, and so in the want of pious affections of heart, holiness does consist very much in those pious affections.

I am far from supposing that all affections do shew a tender heart: Hatred, anger, vain glory, and other selfish and self-

exalting affections, may greatly prevail in the hardest heart. But yet it is evident, that hardness of heart and tenderness of heart, are expressions that relate to the affections of the heart, and denote the heart's being susceptible of, or shut up against certain affections; of which I shall have occasion to speak more afterwards.

Upon the whole, I think it clearly and abundantly evident, that true religion lies very much in the affections. Not that I think these arguments prove, that religion in the hearts of the truly godly, is ever in exact proportion to the degree of affection, and present emotion of the mind: For undoubtedly, there is much affection in the true saints which is not spiritual; their religious affections are often mixed; all is not from grace, but much from nature. And though the affections have not their seat in the body; yet the constitution of the body may very much contribute to the present emotion of the mind. And the degree of religion is rather to be judged of by the fixedness and strength of the habit that is exercised in affection, whereby holy affection is habitual, than by the degree of the present exercise; and the strength of that habit is not always in proportion to outward effects and manifestations, or inward effects, in the hurry and vehemence, and sudden changes of the course of the thoughts of the mind. But yet it is evident, that religion consists so much in affection, as that without holy affection there is no true religion; and no light in the understanding so good, which does not produce holy affection in the heart: No habit or principle in the heart is good, which has no such exercise; and no external fruit is good, which does not proceed from such exercises.

Having thus considered the evidence of the proposition laid down, I proceed to some inferences.

1. We may hence learn how great their error is, who are for discarding all religious affections, as having nothing solid or substantial in them.

There seems to be too much of a disposition this way, prevailing in this land at this time. Because many who, in the late extraordinary season, appeared to have great religious af-

fections, did not manifest a right temper of mind, and run into many errors, in the time of their affection, and the heat of their zeal; and because the high affections of many seem to be so soon come to nothing, and some who seemed to be mightily raised and swallowed up with joy and zeal, for a while, seem to have returned like the dog to his vomit; hence religious affections in general are grown out of credit with great numbers, as though true religion did not at all consist in them. Thus we easily and naturally run from one extreme to another. A little while ago we were in the other extreme; there was a prevalent disposition to look upon all high religious affections as eminent exercises of true grace, without much inquiring into the nature and source of those affections, and the manner in which they arose: If persons did but appear to be indeed very much moved and raised, so as to be full of religious talk, and express themselves with great warmth and earnestness, and to be filled, or to be very full, as the phrases were; it was too much the manner, without further examination, to conclude such persons were full of the Spirit of God, and had eminent experience of his gracious influences. This was the extreme which was prevailing three or four years ago. But of late, instead of esteeming and admiring all religious affections without distinction, it is a thing much more prevalent, to reject and discard all without distinction. Herein appears the subtilty of Satan. While he saw that affections were much in vogue, knowing the greater part of the land were not versed in such things, and had not had much experience of great religious affections to enable them to judge well of them, and distinguish between true and false; then he knew he could best play his game, by sowing tares amongst the wheat, and mingling false affections with the works of God's Spirit: He knew this to be a likely way to delude and eternally ruin many souls, and greatly to wound religion in the saints, and entangle them in a dreadful wilderness, and by and by, to bring all religion into disrepute. But now, when the ill consequences of these false affections appear, and it is become very apparent, that some of those emotions which made a glaring shew, and were by many

greatly admired, were in reality nothing; the devil sees it to be for his interest to go another way to work, and to endeavor to his utmost to propagate and establish a persuasion, that all affections and sensible emotions of the mind, in things of religion, are nothing at all to be regarded, but are rather to be avoided, and carefully guarded against, as things of a pernicious tendency. This he knows is the way to bring all religion to a mere lifeless formality, and effectually shut out the power of godliness, and every thing which is spiritual, and to have all true Christianity turned out of doors. For although to true religion there must indeed be something else besides affection; yet true religion consists so much in the affections, that there can be no true religion without them. He who has no religious affection, is in a state of spiritual death, and is wholly destitute of the powerful, quickening, saving influences of the Spirit of God upon his heart. As there is no true religion where there is nothing else but affection, so there is no true religion where there is no religious affection. As on the one hand, there must be light in the understanding, as well as an affected fervent heart; where there is heat without light, there can be nothing divine or heavenly in that heart; so on the other hand, where there is a kind of light without heat, a head stored with notions and speculations, with a cold and unaffected heart, there can be nothing divine in that light, that knowledge is no true spiritual knowledge of divine things. If the great things of religion are rightly understood, they will affect the heart. The reason why men are not affected by such infinitely great, important, glorious, and wonderful things, as they often hear and read of, in the word of God, is undoubtedly because they are blind; if they were not so, it would be impossible, and utterly inconsistent with human nature, that their hearts should be otherwise, than strongly impressed, and greatly moved by such things.

This manner of slighting all religious affections, is the way exceedingly to harden the hearts of men, and to encourage them in their stupidity and senselessness, and to keep them in a state of spiritual death as long as they live, and bring

them at last to death eternal. The prevailing prejudice against religious affections at this day, in the land, is apparently of awful effect to harden the hearts of sinners, and damp the graces of many of the saints, and stun the life and power of religion, and preclude the effect of ordinances, and hold us down in a state of dulness and apathy, and undoubtedly causes many persons greatly to offend God, in entertaining mean and low thoughts of the extraordinary work he has lately wrought in this land.

And for persons to despise and cry down all religious affections, is the way to shut all religion out of their own hearts, and to make thorough work in ruining their souls.

They who condemn high affections in others, are certainly not likely to have high affections themselves. And let it be considered, that they who have but little religious affection, have certainly but little religion. And they who condemn others for their religious affections, and have none themselves, have no religion.

There are false affections, and there are true. A man's having much affection, does not prove that he has any true religion: But if he has no affection, it proves that he has no true religion. The right way, is not to reject all affections, nor to approve all; but to distinguish between affections, approving some, and rejecting others; separating between the wheat and the chaff, the gold and the dross, the precious and the vile.

2. If it be so, that true religion lies much in the affections, hence we may infer, that such means are to be desired, as have much of a tendency to move the affections. Such books, and such a way of preaching the word, and administration of ordinances, and such a way of worshipping God in prayer, and singing praises, is much to be desired, as has a tendency deeply to affect the hearts of those who attend these means.

Such a kind of means would formerly have been highly approved of, and applauded by the generality of the people of the land, as the most excellent and profitable, and having the greatest tendency to promote the ends of the means of grace,

But the prevailing taste seems of late strangely to be altered: That pathetical manner of praying and preaching, which would formerly have been admired and extolled, and that for this reason, because it had such a tendency to move the affections, now, in great multitudes, immediately excites disgust, and moves no other affections, than those of displeasure and contempt.

Perhaps, formerly the generality (at least of the common people) were in the extreme, of looking too much to an affectionate address, in public performances: But now, a very great part of the people seem to have gone far into a contrary extreme. Indeed there may be such means, as may have a great tendency to stir up the passions of weak and ignorant persons, and yet have no great tendency to benefit their souls: For though they may have a tendency to excite affections, they may have little or none to excite gracious affections, or any affections tending to grace. But undoubtedly, if the things of religion, in the means used, are treated according to their nature, and exhibited truly, so as tends to convey just apprehensions, and a right judgment of them; the more they have a tendency to move the affections the better.

3. If true religion lies much in the affections, hence we may learn, what great cause we have to be ashamed and confounded before God, that we are no more affected with the great things of religion. It appears from what has been said, that this arises from our having so little true religion.

God has given to mankind affections, for the same purpose which he has given all the faculties and principles of the human soul for, viz. that they might be subservient to man's chief end, and the great business for which God has created him, that is, the business of religion. And yet how common is it among mankind, that their affections are much more exercised and engaged in other matters, than in religion! In things which concern men's worldly interest, their outward delights, their honor and reputation, and their natural relations, they have their desires eager, their appetites vehement, their love warm and affectionate, their zeal ardent; in these things their hearts are tender and sensible, easily moved,

deeply impressed, much concerned, very sensibly affected, and greatly engaged; much depressed with grief at worldly losses, and highly raised with joy at worldly successes and prosperity. But how insensible and unmoved are most men, about the great things of another world! How dull are their affections! How heavy and hard their hearts in these matters! Here their love is cold, their desires languid, their zeal low, and their gratitude small. How they can sit and hear of the infinite height, and depth, and length, and breadth of the love of God in Christ Jesus, of his giving his infinitely dear Son, to be offered up a sacrifice for the sins of men, and of the unparalleled love of the innocent, and holy, and tender Lamb of God, manifested in his dying agonies, his bloody sweat, his loud and bitter cries, and bleeding heart, and all this for enemies, to redeem them from deserved, eternal burnings, and to bring to unspeakable and everlasting joy and glory; and yet be cold, and heavy, insensible, and regardless! Where are the exercises of our affections proper, if not here? What is it that does more require them? And what can be a fit occasion of their lively and vigorous exercise, if not such an one as this? Can any thing be set in our view, greater and more important? Any thing more wonderful and surprising? Or more nearly concerning our interest? Can we suppose the wise Creator implanted such principles in the human nature as the affections, to be of use to us, and to be exercised on certain proper occasions, but to lie still on such an occasion as this? Can any Christian, who believes the truth of these things, entertain such thoughts?

If we ought ever to exercise our affections at all, and if the Creator has not unwisely constituted the human nature in making these principles a part of it, when they are vain and useless; then they ought to be exercised about those objects which are most worthy of them. But is there any thing which Christians can find in heaven or earth, so worthy to be the objects of their admiration and love, their earnest and longing desires, their hope, and their rejoicing, and their fervent zeal, as those things that are held forth to us in the gospel of Jesus Christ? In which, not only are things declared

most worthy to affect us, but they are exhibited in the most affecting manner. The glory and beauty of the blessed Jehovah, which is most worthy in itself, to be the object of our admiration and love, is there exhibited in the most affecting manner that can be conceived of, as it appears, shining in all its lustre, in the face of an incarnate, infinitely loving, meek, compassionate, dying Redeemer. All the virtues of the Lamb of God, his humility, patience, meekness, submission, obedience, love and compassion, are exhibited to our view, in a manner the most tending to move our affections, of any that can be imagined; as they all had their greatest trial, and their highest exercise, and so their brightest manifestation, when he was in the most affecting circumstances; even when he was under his last sufferings, those unutterable and unparalleled sufferings he endured, from his tender love and pity to us. There also the hateful nature of our sins is manifested in the most affecting manner possible: As we see the dreadful effects of them, in what our Redeemer, who undertook to answer for us, suffered for them. And there we have the most affecting manifestation of God's hatred of sin, and his wrath and justice in punishing it; as we see his justice in the strictness and inflexibleness of it; and his wrath in its terribleness, in so dreadfully punishing our sins, in one who was infinitely dear to him, and loving to us. So has God disposed things, in the affair of our redemption, and in his glorious dispensations, revealed to us in the gospel, as though every thing were purposely contrived in such a manner, as to have the greatest possible tendency to reach our hearts in the most tender part, and move our affections most sensibly and strongly. How great cause have we therefore to be humbled to the dust, that we are no more affected!

PART II.

Shewing what are no certain signs that Religious Affections are truly gracious, or that they are not.

IF any one, on the reading of what has been just now said, is ready to acquit himself, and say, "I am not one of those who have no religious affections; I am often greatly moved with the consideration of the great things of religion:" Let him not content himself with this, that he has religious affections: For, as we observed before, as we ought not to reject and condemn all affections, as though true religion did not at all consist in affection; so on the other hand, we ought not to approve of all, as though every one that was religiously affected had true grace, and was therein the subject of the saving influences of the Spirit of God; and that therefore the right way is to distinguish among religious affections, between one sort and another. Therefore let us now endeavor to do this: And in order to it, I would do two things.

I. I would mention some things, which are no signs one way or the other, either that affections are such as true religion consists in, or that they are otherwise; that we may be guarded against judging of affections by false signs.

II. I would observe some things, wherein those affections which are spiritual and gracious, differ from those which are not so, and may be distinguished and known.

FIRST, I would take notice of some things, which are no signs that affections are gracious, or that they are not.

I. It is no sign one way or the other, that religious affections are very great, or raised very high.

Some are ready to condemn all high affections: If persons appear to have their religious affections raised to an extraordinary pitch, they are prejudiced against them, and determine that they are delusions, without further inquiry. But if it be, as has been proved, that true religion lies very much in religious affections, then it follows, that if there be a great deal of true religion, there will be great religious affections; if

true religion in the hearts of men be raised to a great height, divine and holy affections will be raised to a great height.

Love is an affection, but will any Christian say, men ought not to love God and Jesus Christ in a high degree? And will any say, we ought not to have a very great hatred of sin, and a very deep sorrow for it? Or that we ought not to exercise a high degree of gratitude to God for the mercies we receive of him, and the great things he has done for the salvation of fallen men? Or that we should not have very great and strong desires after God and holiness? Is there any who will profess, that his affections in religion are great enough; and will say, "I have no cause to be humbled, that I am no more affected with the things of religion than I am; I have no reason to be ashamed, that I have no greater exercises of love to God and sorrow for sin, and gratitude for the mercies which I have received?" Who is there that will bless God that he is affected enough with what he has read and heard of the wonderful love of God to worms and rebels, in giving his only begotten Son to die for them, and of the dying love of Christ; and will pray that he may not be affected with them in any higher degree, because high affections are improper, and very unlovely in Christians, being enthusiastical, and ruinous to true religion?

Our text plainly speaks of great and high affections when it speaks of "rejoicing with joy unspeakable, and full of glory:" Here the most superlative expressions are used, which language will afford. And the scriptures often require us to exercise very high affections: Thus in the first and great commandment of the law, there is an accumulation of expressions, as though words were wanting to express the degree in which we ought to love God: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." So the saints are called upon to exercise high degrees of joy: "Rejoice," says Christ to his disciples, "and be exceeding glad." Matth. v. 12. So it is said, Psalm lxviii. 3. "Let the righteous be glad: Let them rejoice before God; yea, let them exceedingly rejoice." So in the same book of Psalms, the saints are often

called upon to shout for joy ; and in Luke vi. 23, to leap for joy. So they are abundantly called upon to exercise high degrees of gratitude for mercies, to " praise God with all their hearts, with hearts lifted up in the ways of the Lord, and their souls magnifying the Lord, singing his praises, talking of his wondrous works, declaring his doings, &c."

And we find the most eminent saints in scripture often professing high affections. Thus the Psalmist speaks of his love, as if it were unspeakable ; Psal. cxix. 97. " O how love I thy law !" So he expresses a great degree of hatred of sin, Psal. cxxxix. 21, 22. " Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee ? And am not I grieved with them that rise up against thee ? I hate them with perfect hatred." He also expresses a high degree of sorrow for sin : He speaks of his sins " going over his head as an heavy burden, that was too heavy for him : And of his roaring all the day, and his moisture's being turned into the drought of summer," and his bones being as it were broken with sorrow. So he often expresses great degrees of spiritual desires, in a multitude of the strongest expressions which can be conceived of ; such as " his longing, his soul's thirsting as a dry and thirsty land, where no water is, his panting, his flesh and heart crying out, his soul's breaking for the longing it hath," &c. He expresses the exercises of great and extreme grief for the sins of others, Psal. cxix. 136. " Rivers of water run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law." And ver. 53. " Horror hath taken hold upon me, because of the wicked that forsake thy law." He expresses high exercises of joy, Psal. xxi. 1. " The king shall joy in thy strength, and in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice, Psal. lxxi. 23. " My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto thee." Psal. lxiii. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. " Because thy loving kindness is better than life ; my lips shall praise thee. Thus will I bless thee, while I live : I will lift up my hands in thy name. My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness ; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips ; when I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches. Because thou hast

been my help; therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice."

The Apostle Paul expresses high exercises of affection. Thus he expresses the exercises of pity and concern for others' good, even to anguish of heart; a great, fervent, and abundant love, and earnest and longing desires, and exceeding joy; and speaks of the exultation and triumphs of his soul, and his earnest expectation and hope, and his abundant tears, and the travails of his soul, in pity, grief, earnest desires godly jealousy, and fervent zeal, in many places that have been cited already, and which therefore I need not repeat..... John the Baptist expressed great joy, John iii. 39. Those blessed women that anointed the body of Jesus, are represented as in a very high exercise of religious affection, on occasion of Christ's resurrection, Matth. xxviii. 8. "And they departed from the sepulchre with fear and great joy."

It is often foretold of the church of God, in her future happy seasons here on earth, that they shall exceedingly rejoice, Psal. lxxxix. 15, 16. "They shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance. In thy name shall they rejoice all the day: And in thy righteousness shall they be exalted." Zech. ix. 9. "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: Behold thy King cometh," &c. The same is represented in innumerable other places. And because high degrees of joy are the proper and genuine fruits of the gospel of Christ, therefore the angel calls this gospel, "good tidings of great joy, that should be to all people."

The saints and angels in heaven, that have religion in its highest perfection, are exceedingly affected with what they behold and contemplate of God's perfections and works..... They are all as a pure heavenly flame of fire in their love, and in the greatness and strength of their joy and gratitude: Their praises are represented, "as the voice of many waters and as the voice of a great thunder." Now the only reason why their affections are so much higher than the holy affections of saints on earth, is, they see the things they are affected by, more according to their truth, and have their affections more conformed to the nature of things. And, there-

fore, if religious affections in men here below, are but of the same nature and kind with theirs, the higher they are, and the nearer they are to theirs in degree, the better, because therein they will be so much the more conformed to truth, as theirs are.

From these things it certainly appears, that religious affections being in a very high degree, is no evidence that they are not such as have the nature of true religion. Therefore they do greatly err, who condemn persons as enthusiasts, merely because their affections are very high.

And on the other hand, it is no evidence that religious affections are of a spiritual and gracious nature, because they are great. It is very manifest by the holy scripture, our sure and infallible rule to judge of things of this nature, that there are religious affections which are very high, that are not spiritual and saving. The apostle Paul speaks of affections in the Galatians, which had been exceedingly elevated, and which yet he manifestly speaks of, as fearing that they were vain, and had come to nothing, Gal. iv. 15. "Where is the blessedness you spoke of? For I bear you record, that if it had been possible, you would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me." And in the 11th verse, he tells them, "he was afraid of them, lest he had bestowed upon them labor in vain." So the children of Israel were greatly affected with God's mercy to them, when they had seen how wonderfully he wrought for them at the Red Sea, where they sang God's praise; though they soon forgat his works. So they were greatly affected again at mount Sinai, when they saw the marvellous manifestations God made of himself there; and seemed mightily engaged in their minds, and with great forwardness made answer, when God proposed his holy covenant to them, saying, "All that the Lord hath spoken will we do, and be obedient." But how soon was there an end to all this mighty forwardness and engagedness of affection? How quickly were they turned aside after other gods, rejoicing and shouting around their golden calf? So great multitudes who were affected with the miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead, were elevated to a high degree, and made a

mighty ado, when Jesus presently after entered into Jerusalem, exceedingly magnifying Christ, as though the ground were not good enough for the ass he rode to tread upon; and therefore cut branches of palm trees, and strewed them in the way; yea, pulled off their garments, and spread them in the way; and cried with loud voices, "Hosanna to the Son of David, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, Hosanna in the highest;" so as to make the whole city ring again, and put all into an uproar. We learn by the evangelist John, that the reason why the people made this ado, was because they were affected with the miracle of raising Lazarus, John xii. 18. Here was a vast multitude crying Hosanna on this occasion, so that it gave occasion to the Pharisees to say, "Behold the world has gone after him," John xii. 19, but Christ had at that time but few true disciples. And how quickly was this ado at an end? All of this nature is quelled and dead, when this Jesus stands bound with a mock robe and a crown of thorns, to be derided, spit upon, scourged, condemned, and executed. Indeed there was a great and loud outcry concerning him among the multitude, then, as well as before; but of a very different kind: It is not then, Hosanna, Hosanna, but, Crucify, Crucify.

And it is the concurring voice of all orthodox divines, that there may be religious affections, which are raised to a very high degree, and yet there be nothing of true religion.*

II. It is no sign that affections have the nature of true religion, or that they have not, that they have great effects on the body.

All affections whatsoever, have in some respect or degree, an effect on the body. As was observed before, such is our nature, and such are the laws of union of soul and body, that the mind can have no lively or vigorous exercise, without some effect upon the body. So subject is the body to the mind, and so much do its fluids, especially the animal spirits, attend the motions and exercises of the mind, that there cannot be so much as an intense thought, without an effect upon them.

* Mr. Stoddard observes, "That common affections are sometimes stronger than saving." GUIDE TO CHRIST. p. 21.

Yea, it is questionable whether an imbodied soul ever so much as thinks one thought, or has any exercise at all, but that there is some corresponding motion or alteration of motion, in some degree, of the fluids, in some part of the body. But universal experience shews, that the exercise of the affections have in a special manner a tendency to some sensible effect upon the body. And if this be so, that all affections have some effect on the body, we may then well suppose, the greater those affections be, and the more vigorous their exercise (other circumstances being equal) the greater will be the effect on the body. Hence it is not to be wondered at, that very great and strong exercises of the affections should have great effects on the body. And therefore, seeing there are very great affections, both common and spiritual; hence it is not to be wondered at, that great effects on the body should arise from both these kinds of affections. And consequently these effects are no signs, that the affections they arise from, are of one kind or the other.

Great effects on the body certainly are no sure evidences that affections are spiritual; for we see that such effects oftentimes arise from great affections about temporal things, and when religion is no way concerned in them. And if great affections about secular things, that are purely natural, may have these effects, I know not by what rule we should determine that high affections about religious things, which arise in like manner from nature, cannot have the like effect.

Nor, on the other hand, do I know of any rule any have to determine, that gracious and holy affections, when raised as high as any natural affections, and have equally strong and vigorous exercises, cannot have a great effect on the body. No such rule can be drawn from reason: I know of no reason, why a being affected with a view of God's glory should not cause the body to faint, as well as being affected with a view of Solomon's glory. And no such rule has as yet been produced from the scripture; none has ever been found in all the late controversies which have been about things of this nature. There is a great power in spiritual affections: We read

of the power which worketh in Christians,* and of the Spirit of God being in them as the Spirit of power,† and of the effectual working of his power in them,‡ yea, of the working of God's mighty power in them.‖ But man's nature is weak: Flesh and blood are represented in scripture as exceeding weak; and particularly with respect to its unfitness for great spiritual and heavenly operations and exercises, Mat. xxvi. 41. 1 Cor. xv. 43, and 50. The text we are upon speaks of "joy unspeakable, and full of glory." And who that considers what man's nature is, and what the nature of the affections is, can reasonably doubt but that such unutterable and glorious joys, may be too great and mighty for weak dust and ashes, so as to be considerably overbearing to it? It is evident by the scripture, that true divine discoveries, or ideas of God's glory, when given in a great degree, have a tendency, by affecting the mind, to overbear the body; because the scripture teaches us often, that if these ideas or views should be given to such a degree, as they are given in heaven, the weak frame of the body could not subsist under it, and that no man can in that manner, see God and live. The knowledge which the saints have of God's beauty and glory in this world, and those holy affections that arise from it, are of the same nature and kind with what the saints are the subjects of in heaven, differing only in degree and circumstances: What God gives them here, is a foretaste of heavenly happiness, and an earnest of their future inheritance. And who shall limit God in his giving this earnest, or say he shall give so much of the inheritance, such a part of the future reward, as an earnest of the whole, and no more? And seeing God has taught us in his word, that the whole reward is such, that it would at once destroy the body, is it not too bold a thing for us, so to set bounds to the sovereign God, as to say, that in giving the earnest of this reward in this world, he shall never give so much of it, as in the least to diminish the strength of the body, when God has no where thus limited himself?

The Psalmist, speaking of the vehement religious affections he had, speaks of an effect in his flesh or body, besides what was

* Eph. iii. 7. † 2 Tim. i. 7. ‡ Eph. iii. 7, 20. ‖ Eph. i. 19.

in his soul, expressly distinguishing one from the other, once and again, Psal. lxxxiv. 2. "My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: My heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God." Here is a plain distinction between the heart and the flesh, as being each affected. So Psal. lxiii. 1. "My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee, in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is." Here also is an evident designed distinction between the soul and the flesh.

The prophet Habakkuk speaks of his body's being overborn by a sense of the majesty of God, Hab. iii. 16. "When I heard, my belly trembled: My lips quivered at the voice: Rottenness entered into my bones, and I trembled in myself." So the Psalmist speaks expressly of his flesh trembling, Psal. cxix. 120. "My flesh trembleth for fear of thee."

That such ideas of God's glory as are sometimes given in this world, have a tendency to overbear the body, is evident, because the scripture gives us an account, that this has sometimes actually been the effect of those external manifestations God has made of himself to some of the saints which were made to that end, viz. to give them an idea of God's majesty and glory. Such instances we have in the prophet Daniel, and the apostle John. Daniel giving an account of an external representation of the glory of Christ, says, Dan. x. 8. "And there remained no strength in me; for my comeliness was turned into corruption, and I retained no strength." And the apostle John giving an account of a like manifestation made to him, says, Rev. i. 17. "And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead." It is in vain to say here, these were only external manifestations or symbols of the glory of Christ, which these saints beheld: For though it be true, that they were outward representations of Christ's glory, which they beheld with their bodily eyes; yet the end and use of these external symbols or representations, was to give to these prophets an idea of the thing represented, and that was the true divine glory and majesty of Christ, which is his spiritual glory; they were made use of only as significations of this spiritual glory, and thus undoubtedly they received them, and

improved them, and were affected by them. According to the end for which God intended these outward signs, they received by them a great and lively apprehension of the real glory and majesty of God's nature, which they were signs of; and thus were greatly affected, their souls swallowed up, and their bodies overborn. And I think they are very bold and daring, who will say God cannot, or shall not give the like clear and affecting ideas and apprehensions of the same real glory and majesty of his nature, to any of his saints, without the intervention of any such external shadows of it.

Before I leave this head, I would farther observe, that it is plain the scripture often makes use of bodily effects, to express the strength of holy and spiritual affections; such as trembling,* groaning,† being sick,‡ crying out,‖ panting,§ and fainting.†† Now if it be supposed, that these are only figurative expressions, to represent the degree of affection: Yet I hope all will allow, that they are fit and suitable figures to represent the high degree of those spiritual affections, which the Spirit of God makes use of them to represent; which I do not see how they would be, if those spiritual affections, let them be in never so high a degree, have no tendency to any such things; but that on the contrary, they are the proper effects and sad tokens of false affections, and the delusion of the devil. I cannot think, God would commonly make use of things which are very alien from spiritual affections, and are shrewd marks of the hand of Satan, and smell strong of the bottomless pit, as beautiful figures, to represent the high degree of holy and heavenly affections.

III. It is no sign that affections are truly gracious affections, or that they are not, that they cause those who have them to be fluent, fervent, and abundant, in talking of the things of religion.

There are many persons, who, if they see this in others, are greatly prejudiced against them. Their being so full of talk, is with them a sufficient ground to condemn them, as Phari-

* Psal. cxix. 120. Ezra ix. 4. Isa. lxvi. 2, 5. Hab. iii. 16. † Rom. viii. 26. ‡ Cant. ii. 5, and v. 8. ‖ Psal. lxxxiv. 2. § Psal. xxxviii. 10, and xlii. 1, and cxix. 131. †† Psal. lxxxiv. 2, and cxix. 81.

sees, and ostentatious hypocrites. On the other hand, there are many, who if they see this effect in any, are very ignorantly and imprudently forward, at once to determine that they are the true children of God, and are under the saving influences of his Spirit, and speak of it as a great evidence of a new creature; they say, "such an one's mouth is now opened: He used to be slow to speak; but now he is full and free: He is free now to open his heart, and tell his experiences, and declare the praises of God; it comes from him, as free as water from a fountain;" and the like. And especially are they captivated into a confident and undoubting persuasion, that they are savingly wrought upon, if they are not only free and abundant, but very affectionate and earnest in their talk.

But this is the fruit of but little judgment, a scanty and short experience; as events do abundantly shew: And is a mistake persons often run into, through their trusting to their own wisdom and discerning, and making their own notions their rule, instead of the holy scripture. Though the scripture be full of rules, both how we should judge of our own state, and also how we should be conducted in our opinion of others; yet we have no where any rule, by which to judge ourselves or others to be in a good estate, from any such effect: For this is but the religion of the mouth and of the tongue, and what is in the scripture represented by the leaves of a tree, which, though the tree ought not to be without them, yet are no where given as an evidence of the goodness of the tree.

That persons are disposed to be abundant in talking of things of religion, may be from a good cause, and it may be from a bad one. It may be because their hearts are very full of holy affections; "for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh:" And it may be because persons' hearts are very full of religious affection which is not holy; for still out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. It is very much the nature of the affections, of whatever kind they be, and whatever objects they are exercised about, if they are strong, to dispose persons to be very much in speaking of that

which they are affected with: And not only to speak much, but to speak very earnestly and fervently. And therefore persons talking abundantly and very fervently about the things of religion, can be an evidence of no more than this, that they are very much affected with the things of religion; but this may be (as has been already shown) and there be no grace. That which men are greatly affected with, while the high affection lasts, they will be earnestly engaged about, and will be likely to shew that earnestness in their talk and behavior; as the greater part of the Jews, in all Judah and Galilee, did for a while, about John the Baptist's preaching and baptism, when they were willing for a season to rejoice in his light; a mighty ado was made, all over the land, and among all sorts of persons, about this great prophet and his ministry. And so the multitude, in like manner, often manifested a great earnestness, a mighty engagedness of spirit, in every thing that was external, about Christ and his preaching and miracles, "being astonished at his doctrine, anon with joy receiving the word," following him sometimes night and day, leaving meat, drink, and sleep to hear him; once following him into the wilderness, fasting three days going to hear him; sometimes crying him up to the clouds, saying, "Never man spake like this man!" Being fervent and earnest in what they said. But what did these things come to, in the greater part of them?

A person may be over full of talk of his own experiences; commonly falling upon it, every where, and in all companies; and when it is so, it is rather a dark sign than a good one. As a tree that is over full of leaves seldom bears much fruit; and as a cloud, though to appearance very pregnant and full of water, if it brings with it over much wind, seldom affords much rain to the dry and thirsty earth; which very thing the Holy Spirit is pleased several times to make use of, to represent a great shew of religion with the mouth, without answerable fruit in the life, Prov. xxv. 14. "Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift, is like clouds and wind without rain." And the apostle Jude, speaking of some in the primitive times,

that crept in unawares among the saints, and having a great shew of religion were for a while not suspected, "These are clouds (says he) without water, carried about of winds," Jude ver. 4 and 12. And the apostle Peter, speaking of the same, says, 2 Pet. ii. 17. "These are clouds without water, carried with a tempest."

False affections, if they are equally strong, are much more forward to declare themselves, than true: Because it is the nature of false religion, to affect shew and observation; as it was with the Pharisees.*

IV. It is no sign that affections are gracious, or that they are otherwise, that persons did not make them themselves, or excite them of their own contrivance, and by their own strength.

There are many in these days, that condemn all affections which are excited in a way that the subjects of them can give no account of, as not seeming to be the fruit of any of their own endeavors, or the natural consequence of the faculties and principles of human nature, in such circumstances, and under such means; but to be from the influence of some extrinsic and supernatural power upon their minds. How

* That famous experimental divine, Mr. Shepherd, says, "A Pharisee's trumpet shall be heard to the town's end; when simplicity walks through the town unseen. Hence a man will sometimes covertly commend himself, (and *myself* ever comes in) and tells you a long story of conversion; and an hundred to one if some lie or other slip not out with it. Why, the secret meaning is, *I pray admire me.* Hence complain of wants and weaknesses: *Pray think what a broken hearted Christian I am.*" *Parab. of the ten virgins.* Part I. page 179, 180.

And holy Mr. Flavel says thus, "O reader, if thy heart were right with God, and thou didst not cheat thyself with a vain profession, thou wouldst have frequent business with God, which thou wouldst be loth thy dearest friend, or the wife of thy bosom should be privy to. *Non est religio, ubi omnia patent.* Religion doth not lie open to all, to the eyes of men. Observed duties maintain our credit; but secret duties maintain our life. It was the saying of an heathen, about his secret correspondency with his friend, *What need the world be acquainted with it? Thou and I are theatre enough to each other.* There are inclosed pleasures in religion, which none but renewed spiritual souls do feelingly understand." *Flavel's Touchstone of Sincerity*, Chap. II. Sect. 2.

greatly has the doctrine of the inward experience, or sensible perceiving of the immediate power and operation of the Spirit of God, been reproached and ridiculed by many of late? They say, the manner of the Spirit of God is to cooperate in a silent, secret, and undiscernible way with the use of means, and our own endeavors; so that there is no distinguishing by sense, between the influences of the Spirit of God, and the natural operations of the faculties of our own minds.

And it is true, that for any to expect to receive the saving influences of the Spirit of God, while they neglect a diligent improvement of the appointed means of grace, is unreasonable presumption. And to expect that the Spirit of God will savingly operate upon their minds, without the Spirit's making use of means, as subservient to the effect, is enthusiastical. It is also undoubtedly true, that the Spirit of God is very various in the manner and circumstances of his operations, and that sometimes he operates in a way more secret and gradual, and from smaller beginnings, than at others.

But if there be indeed a power, entirely different from, and beyond our power, or the power of all means and instruments, and above the power of nature, which is requisite in order to the production of saving grace in the heart, according to the general profession of the country; then, certainly it is in no wise unreasonable to suppose, that this effect should very frequently be produced after such a manner, as to make it very manifest, apparent, and sensible that it is so. If grace be indeed owing to the powerful and efficacious operation of an extrinsic agent, or divine efficient out of ourselves, why is it unreasonable to suppose it should seem to be so to them who are the subjects of it? Is it a strange thing, that it should seem to be as it is? When grace in the heart indeed is not produced by our strength, nor is the effect of the natural power of our own faculties, or any means or instruments, but is properly the workmanship and production of the Spirit of the Almighty, is it a strange and unaccountable thing, that it should seem to them who are subjects of it, agreeable to truth, and not right contrary to truth; so that if persons tell

of effects that they are conscious to in their own minds, that seem to them not to be from the natural power or operation of their minds, but from the supernatural power of some other agent, it should at once be looked upon as a sure evidence of their being under a delusion, because things seem to them to be as they are? For this is the objection which is made: It is looked upon as a clear evidence, that the apprehensions and affections that many persons have, are not really from such a cause, because they seem to them to be from that cause: They declare that what they are conscious of, seems to them evidently not to be from themselves, but from the mighty power of the Spirit of God; and others from hence condemn them, and determine what they experience is not from the Spirit of God, but from themselves, or from the devil. Thus unreasonably are multitudes treated at this day by their neighbors.

If it be indeed so, as the scripture abundantly teaches, that grace in the soul is so the effect of God's power, that it is fitly compared to those effects which are farthest from being owing to any strength in the subject, such as a generation, or a being begotten, and resurrection, or a being raised from the dead, and creation, or a being brought out of nothing into being, and that it is an effect wherein the mighty power of God is greatly glorified, and the exceeding greatness of his power is manifested;* then what account can be given of it, that the Almighty, in so great a work of his power, should so carefully hide his power, that the subjects of it should be able to discern nothing of it? Or what reason or revelation have any to determine that he does so? If we may judge by the scripture this is not agreeable to God's manner, in his operations and dispensations; but on the contrary, it is God's manner, in the great works of his power and mercy which he works for his people, to order things so as to make his hand visible, and his power conspicuous, and men's dependence on him most evident, that no flesh should glory in his presence,† that God alone might be ex-

* Eph. i. 17....20. † 1 Cor. i. 27, 28, 29.

alted,† and that the excellency of the power might be of God and not of man,‡ and that Christ's power might be manifested in our weakness,‖ and none might say mine own hand hath saved me.§ So it was in most of those temporal salvations which God wrought for Israel of old, which were types of the salvation of God's people from their spiritual enemies. So it was in the redemption of Israel from their Egyptian bondage; he redeemed them with a strong hand, and an outstretched arm; and that his power might be the more conspicuous, he suffered Israel first to be brought into the most helpless and forlorn circumstances. So it was in the great redemption by Gideon; God would have his army diminished to a handful, and they without any other arms than trumpets, and lamps, and earthen pitchers. So it was in the deliverance of Israel from Goliath, by a stripling with a sling and a stone. So it was in that great work of God, his calling the Gentiles, and converting the Heathen world, after Christ's ascension, after that the world by wisdom knew not God, and all the endeavors of philosophers had proved in vain, for many ages, to reform the world, and it was by every thing become abundantly evident, that the world was utterly helpless, by any thing else but the mighty power of God. And so it was in most of the conversions of particular persons, we have an account of in the history of the New Testament: They were not wrought on in that silent, secret, gradual, and insensible manner, which is now insisted on; but with those manifest evidences of a supernatural power, wonderfully and suddenly causing a great change, which in these days are looked upon as certain signs of delusion and enthusiasm.

The Apostle, in Eph. i. 18, 19, speaks of God's enlightening the minds of Christians, and so bringing them to believe in Christ, to the end that they might know the exceeding greatness of his power to them who believe. The words are, "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what

† Isa. ii. 11.....17. ‡ 2 Cor. iv. 7. ‖ 2 Cor. xii. 9. § Judg. vii. 2.

is the exceeding greatness of his power to us ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power," &c. Now when the apostle speaks of their being thus the subjects of his power, in their enlightening and effectual calling, to the end that they might know what his mighty power was to them who believe, he can mean nothing else than "that they might know by experience." But if the saints know this power by experience, then they feel it and discern it, and are conscious of it; as sensibly distinguishable from the natural operations of their own minds, which is not agreeable to a notion of God's operating so secretly, and undiscernably, that it cannot be known that they are the subjects of the influence of any extrinsic power at all, any otherwise than as they may argue it from scripture assertions; which is a different thing from knowing it by experience.

So that it is very unreasonable and unscriptural, to determine that affections are not from the gracious operations of God's Spirit, because they are sensibly not from the persons themselves that are the subjects of them.

On the other hand, it is no evidence that affections are gracious, that they are not purposely produced by those who are the subjects of them, or that they arise in their minds in a manner they cannot account for.

There are some who make this an argument in their own favor; when speaking of what they have experienced, they say, "I am sure I did not make it myself; it was a fruit of no contrivance or endeavor of mine; it came when I thought nothing of it; if I might have the world for it, I cannot make it again when I please." And hence they determine that what they have experienced, must be from the mighty influence of the Spirit of God, and is of a saving nature; but very ignorantly, and without grounds. What they have been the subjects of, may indeed not be from themselves directly, but may be from the operation of an invisible agent, some spirit besides their own: But it does not thence follow, that it was from the Spirit of God. There are other spirits who have influence on the minds of men, besides the Holy Ghost. We are directed not to believe every spirit, but to try the spirits,

whether they be of God. There are many false spirits, exceeding busy with men, who often transform themselves into angels of light, and do in many wonderful ways, with great subtilty and power, mimic the operations of the Spirit of God. And there are many of Satan's operations, which are very distinguishable from the voluntary exercises of men's own minds. They are so, in those dreadful and horrid suggestions, and blasphemous injections with which he follows many persons; and in vain and fruitless frights and terrors, which he is the author of. And the power of Satan may be as immediate, and as evident in false comforts and joys, as in terrors and horrid suggestions? And oftentimes is so in fact. It is not in men's power to put themselves into such raptures, as the Anabaptists in Germany, and many other raving enthusiasts like them, have been the subjects of.

And besides, it is to be considered that persons may have those impressions on their minds, which may not be of their own producing, nor from an evil spirit, but from the Spirit of God, and yet not be from any saving, but a common influence of the Spirit of God; and the subjects of such impressions may be of the number of those we read of, Heb. vi. 4, 5.... "That are once enlightened, and taste of the heavenly gift, and are made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and taste the good word of God, and the power of the world to come;" and yet may be wholly unacquainted with those "better things that accompany salvation," spoken of ver. 9.

And where neither a good nor evil spirit have any immediate hand, persons, especially such as are of a weak and vapory habit of body, and the brain weak and easily susceptive of impressions, may have strange apprehensions and imaginations, and strong affections attending them, unaccountably arising, which are not voluntarily produced by themselves. We see that such persons are liable to such impressions about temporal things; and there is equal reason, why they should about spiritual things. As a person who is asleep has dreams that he is not the voluntary author of; so may such persons in like manner, be the subjects of involuntary impressions, when they are awake.

V. It is no sign that religious affections are truly holy and spiritual, or that they are not, that they come with texts of scripture, remarkably brought to the mind.

It is no sign that affections are not gracious, that they are occasioned by scriptures so coming to mind; provided it be the scripture itself, or the truth which the scripture so brought contains and teaches, that is the foundation of the affection, and not merely, or mainly, the sudden and unusual manner of its coming to the mind.

But on the other hand, neither is it any sign that affections are gracious, that they arise on occasion of scriptures brought suddenly and wonderfully to the mind; whether those affections be fear or hope, joy or sorrow, or any other. Some seem to look upon this as a good evidence that their affections are saving, especially if the affections excited are hope or joy, or any other which are pleasing and delightful. They will mention it as an evidence that all is right, that their experience came with the word, and will say, "There were such and such sweet promises brought to my mind: They came suddenly, as if they were spoke to me: I had no hand in bringing such a text to my own mind; I was not thinking of any thing leading to it; it came all at once, so that I was surprised. I had not thought of it a long time before; I did not know at first that it was scripture; I did not remember that ever I had read it." And it may be, they will add, "One scripture came flowing in after another, and so texts all over the Bible, the most sweet and pleasant, and the most apt and suitable which could be devised; and filled me full as I could hold: I could not but stand and admire: The tears flowed; I was full of joy, and could not doubt any longer." And thus they think they have undoubted evidence that their affections must be from God, and of the right kind, and their state good: But without any manner of grounds. How come they by any such rule, as that if any affections or experiences arise with promises, and comfortable texts of scripture, unaccountably brought to mind, without their recollection, or if a great number of sweet texts follow one another in a chain, that this is a certain evidence their experiences are

saving? Where is any such rule to be found in the Bible, the great and only sure directory in things of this nature?

What deceives many of the less understanding and considerate sort of people, in this matter, seems to be this; that the scripture is the word of God, and has nothing in it which is wrong, but is pure and perfect; and therefore, those experiences which come from the scripture must be right. But then it should be considered, affections may arise on occasion of the scripture, and not properly come from the scripture, as the genuine fruit of the scripture, and by a right use of it; but from an abuse of it. All that can be argued from the purity and perfection of the word of God, with respect to experiences, is this, that those experiences which are agreeable to the word of God, are right and cannot be otherwise; and not that those affections must be right, which arise on occasion of the word of God coming to the mind.

What evidence is there that the devil cannot bring texts of scripture to the mind, and misapply them to deceive persons? There seems to be nothing in this which exceeds the power of Satan. It is no work of such mighty power, to bring sounds or letters to persons' minds, that we have any reason to suppose nothing short of Omnipotence can be sufficient for it. If Satan has power to bring any words or sounds at all to persons' minds, he may have power to bring words contained in the Bible. There is no higher sort of power required in men, to make the sounds which express the words of a text of scripture, than to make the sounds which express the words of an idle story or song. And so the same power in Satan, which is sufficient to renew one of those kinds of sounds in the mind, is sufficient to renew the other: The different signification, which depends wholly on custom, alters not the case, as to ability to make or revive the sounds or letters. Or will any suppose, that texts or scriptures are such sacred things, that the devil durst not abuse them, nor touch them? In this also they are mistaken. He who was bold enough to lay hold on Christ himself, and carry him hither and thither, into the wilderness, and into an high mountain, and to a pinnacle of the temple, is not afraid to touch the scripture, and abuse that

for his own purposes; as he shewed at the same time that he was so bold with Christ, he then brought one scripture and another, to deceive and tempt him. And if Satan did presume, and was permitted to put Christ himself in mind of texts of scripture to tempt *him*, what reason have we to determine, that he dare not, or will not be permitted, to put wicked men in mind of texts of scripture, to tempt and deceive *them*? And if Satan may thus abuse one text of scripture, so he may another. Its being a very excellent place of scripture, a comfortable and precious promise, alters not the case, as to his courage or ability. And if he can bring one comfortable text to the mind, so he may a thousand; and may choose out such scriptures as tend most to serve his purpose; and may heap up scripture promises, tending, according to the perverse application he makes of them, wonderfully to remove the rising doubts, and to confirm the false joy and confidence of a poor deluded sinner.

We know the devil's instruments, corrupt and heretical teachers, can and do pervert the scripture, to their own and others' damnation, 2 Pet. iii. 16. We see they have the free use of scripture, in every part of it: There is no text so precious and sacred, but they are permitted to abuse it, to the eternal ruin of multitudes of souls; and there are no weapons they make use of with which they do more execution. And there is no manner of reason to determine, that the devil is not permitted thus to use the scripture, as well as his instruments. For when the latter do it, they do it as his instruments and servants, and through his instigation and influence: And doubtless he does the same he instigates others to do; the devil's servants do but follow their master, and do the same work that he does himself.

And as the devil can abuse the scripture, to deceive and destroy men, so may men's own folly and corruptions as well. The sin which is in men, acts like its father. Men's own hearts are deceitful like the devil, and use the same means to deceive.

So that it is evident, that persons may have high affections of hope and joy, arising on occasion of texts of scripture, yea

precious promises of scripture coming suddenly and remarkbly to their minds, as though they were spoke to them, yea, a great multitude of such texts, following one another in a wonderful manner, and yet all this be no argument that these affections are divine, or that they are any other than the effects of Satan's delusions.

And I would further observe, that persons may have raised and joyful affections, which may come with the word of God, and not only so, but from the word, and those affections not be from Satan, nor yet properly from the corruptions of their own hearts, but from some influence of the Spirit of God with the word, and yet have nothing of the nature of true and saving religion in them. Thus the stony ground hearers had great joy from the word; yea which is represented as arising from the word, as growth from a seed; and their affections had, in their appearance, a very great and exact resemblance with those represented by the growth on the good ground, the difference not appearing until it was discovered by the consequences in a time of trial: And yet there was no saving religion in these affections.*

VI. It is no evidence that religious affections are saving, or that they are otherwise, that there is an appearance of love in them.

There are no professing Christians who pretend, that this is an argument against the truth and saving nature of religious affections. But, on the other hand, there are some who suppose, it is a good evidence that affections are from the sanctifying and saving influences of the Holy Ghost....Their argument is that Satan cannot love; this affection being directly contrary to the devil, whose very nature is enmity and malice. And it is true, that nothing is more excel-

* Mr. Stoddard, in his *Guide to Christ*, speaks of it as a common thing, for persons, while in a natural condition, and before they have ever truly accepted of Christ, to have scripture promises come to them, with a great deal of refreshing; which they take as tokens of God's love, and hope that God has accepted them; and so are confident of their good estate. Page 8, 9. Impression *anno* 1735.

lent, heavenly, and divine, than a spirit of true Christian love to God and men: It is more excellent than knowledge, or prophecy, or miracles, or speaking with the tongue of men and angels. It is the chief of the graces of God's Spirit, and the life, essence and sum of all true religion; and that by which we are most conformed to heaven, and most contrary to hell and the devil. But yet it is ill arguing from hence, that there are no counterfeits of it. It may be observed that the more excellent any thing is, the more will be the counterfeits of it. Thus there are many more counterfeits of silver and gold, than of iron and copper: There are many false diamonds and rubies, but who goes about to counterfeit common stones? Though the more excellent things are, the more difficult it is to make any thing that shall be like them, in their essential nature and internal virtues; yet the more manifold will the counterfeits be, and the more will art and subtilty be displayed, in an exact imitation of the outward appearance. Thus there is the greatest danger of being cheated in buying of medicines that are most excellent and sovereign, though it be most difficult to imitate them with any thing of the like value and virtue, and their counterfeits are good for nothing when we have them. So it is with Christian virtues and graces; the subtilty of Satan, and men's deceitful hearts, are wont chiefly to be exercised in counterfeiting those that are in highest repute. So there are perhaps no graces that have more counterfeits than love and humility; these being virtues wherein the beauty of a true Christian does especially appear.

But with respect to love; it is plain by the scripture, that persons may have a kind of religious love, and yet have no saving grace. Christ speaks of many professing Christians that have such love, whose love will not continue, and so shall fail of salvation, Matth. xxiv. 12, 13. "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." Which latter words plainly shew, that those spoken of before, whose love shall not endure to the end, but wax cold, should not be saved.

Persons may seem to have love to God and Christ, yea to have very strong and violent affections of this nature, and yet have no grace. For this was evidently the case with many graceless Jews, such as cried Jesus up so high, following him day and night, without meat, drink, or sleep; such as said, "Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest," and cried, "Hosanna to the Son of David."*

The Apostle seems to intimate, that there were many in his days who had a counterfeit love to Christ, in Eph. vi. 24. "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." The last word, in the original, signifies *incorruption*; which shews, that the Apostle was sensible that there were many who had a kind of love to Christ, whose love was not pure and spiritual.

So also Christian love to the people of God may be counterfeited. It is evident by the scripture, that there may be strong affections of this kind, without saving grace; as there were in the Galatians towards the Apostle Paul, when they were ready to pluck out their eyes and give them to him; although the Apostle expresses his fear that their affections were come to nothing, and that he had bestowed upon them labor in vain, Gal. iv. 11, 15.

VII. Persons having religious affections of many kinds, accompanying one another, is not sufficient to determine whether they have any gracious affections or no.

Though false religion is wont to be maimed and monstrous, and not to have that entireness and symmetry of parts, which is to be seen in true religion: Yet there may be a great variety of false affections together, that may resemble gracious affections.

* Agreeable to this, Mr. Stoddard observes, in his *Guide to Christ*, that some sinners have pangs of affection, and give an account that they find a spirit of love to God, and of their aiming at the glory of God, having that which has a great resemblance of saving grace; and that sometimes their common affections are stronger than saving. And supposes, that sometimes natural men may have such violent pangs of false affection to God, that they may think themselves willing to be damned. Page 21, and 65.

It is evident that there are counterfeits of all kinds of gracious affections; as of love to God, and love to the brethren, as has been just now observed; so of godly sorrow for sin, as in Pharaoh, Saul, and Ahab, and the children of Israel in the wilderness, Exod. ix. 27. 1 Sam. xxiv. 16, 17, and xxvi. 21. 1 Kings, xxi. 27. Numb. xiv. 39, 40, and of the fear of God, as in the Samaritans, "who feared the Lord, and served their own gods at the same time," 2 Kings xvii. 32, 33, and those enemies of God we read of, Psal. lxvi. 3, who, "through the greatness of God's power, submit themselves to him," or, as it is in the Hebrew, "lie unto him," i. e. yield a counterfeit reverence and submission: So of a gracious gratitude, as in the children of Israel, who sang God's praise at the Red Sea, Psal. cvi. 12, and Naaman the Syrian, after his miraculous cure of his leprosy, 2 Kings, v. 15, &c.

So of spiritual joy, as in the stony ground hearers, Mat. xiii. 20, and particularly many of John the Baptist's hearers, John v. 35. So of zeal, as in Jehu, 2 Kings x. 16, and in Paul before his conversion, Gal. i. 14. Phil. iii. 6, and the unbelieving Jews, Acts xxii. 3. Rom. x. 2. So graceless persons may have earnest religious desires, which may be like Balaam's desires, which he expresses under an extraordinary view that he had of the happy state of God's people, as distinguished from all the rest of the world, Numb. xxiii. 9, 10. They may also have a strong hope of eternal life, as the Pharisees had.

And as men, while in a state of nature, are capable of a resemblance of all kinds of religious affections, so nothing hinders but that they may have many of them together. And what appears in fact, does abundantly evince that it is very often so indeed. It seems commonly to be so, that when false affections are raised high, many false affections attend each other. The multitude that attended Christ into Jerusalem, after that great miracle of raising Lazarus, seem to have been moved with many religious affections at once, and all in a high degree. They seem to have been filled with admiration, and there was a shew of an high affection of love, and also of a great degree of reverence, in their laying their gar-

ments on the ground for Christ to tread upon; and also of great gratitude to him, for the great and good works he had wrought, praising him with loud voices for his salvation; and earnest desires of the coming of God's kingdom, which they supposed Jesus was now about to set up, and shewed great hopes and raised expectations of it, expecting it would immediately appear; and hence were filled with joy, by which they were so animated in their acclamations, as to make the whole city ring with the noise of them; and appeared great in their zeal and forwardness to attend Jesus, and assist him without further delay, now in the time of the great feast of the passover, to set up his kingdom. And it is easy, from nature, and the nature of the affections, to give an account why, when one affection is raised very high, that it should excite others; especially if the affection which is raised high, be that of counterfeit love, as it was in the multitude who cried Hosanna. This will naturally draw many other affections after it. For, as was observed before, love is the chief of the affections, and as it were the fountain of them. Let us suppose a person who has been for some time in great exercise and terror through fear of hell, and his heart weakened with distress and dreadful apprehensions, and upon the brink of despair, and is all at once delivered, by being firmly made to believe, through some delusion of Satan, that God has pardoned him, and accepts him as the object of his dear love, and promises him eternal life; as suppose through some vision, or strong idea or imagination, suddenly excited in him, of a person with a beautiful countenance, smiling on him, and with arms open, and with blood dropping down, which the person conceives to be Christ, without any other enlightening of the understanding, to give a view of the spiritual divine excellency of Christ and his fulness; and of the way of salvation revealed in the gospel: Or perhaps by some voice or words coming as if they were spoken to him, such as these, "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee;" or, "Fear not, it is the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom," which he takes to be immediately spoken by God to him, though there was no preceding acceptance of Christ, or closing of the heart with him:

I say, if we should suppose such a case, what various passions would naturally crowd at once, or one after another, into such a person's mind? It is easy to be accounted for, from mere principles of nature, that a person's heart, on such an occasion, should be raised up to the skies with transports of joy; and be filled with fervent affection, to that imaginary God or Redeemer, who he supposes has thus rescued him from the jaws of such dreadful destruction, that his soul was so amazed with the fears of, and has received him with such endearment, as a peculiar favorite; and that now he should be filled with admiration and gratitude, and his mouth should be opened, and be full of talk about what he has experienced; and that, for a while, he should think and speak of scarce any thing else, and should seem to magnify that God who has done so much for him, and call upon others to rejoice with him, and appear with a cheerful countenance, and talk with a loud voice: And however, before his deliverance, he was full of quarrellings against the justice of God, that now it should be easy for him to submit to God, and own his unworthiness, and cry out against himself, and appear to be very humble before God, and lie at his feet as tame as a lamb; and that he should now confess his unworthiness, and cry out, "Why me? Why me?" (Like Saul, who when Samuel told him that God had appointed him to be king, makes answer, "Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel, and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? Wherefore then speakest thou so to me?" Much in the language of David, the true saint, 2 Sam. vii. 18. "Who am I, and what is my father's house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?") Nor is it to be wondered at, that now he should delight to be with them who acknowledge and applaud his happy circumstances, and should love all such as esteem and admire him and what he has experienced, and have violent zeal against all such as would make nothing of such things, and be disposed openly to separate, and as it were to proclaim war with all who be not of his party, and should now glory in his sufferings, and be very much for condemning and censuring all who seem to doubt, or make any difficulty of these things;

and while the warmth of his affections lasts, should be mighty forward to take pains, and deny himself, to promote the interest of the party who he imagines favors such things, and seem earnestly desirous to increase the number of them, as the Pharisees compassed sea and land to make one *proselyte*.* And so I might go on, and mention many other things, which will naturally arise in such circumstances. He must have but slightly considered human nature, who thinks such things as these cannot arise in this manner, without any supernatural interposition of divine power.

As from true divine love flow all Christian affections, so from a counterfeit love in like manner naturally flow other false affections. In both cases, love is the fountain, and the other affections are the streams. The various faculties, principles, and affections of the human nature, are as it were many channels from one fountain: If there be sweet water in the fountain, sweet water will from thence flow out into those various channels; but if the water in the fountain be poisonous, then poisonous streams will also flow out into all those channels. So that the channels and streams will be alike, corresponding one with another; but the great difference will lie in the nature of the water. Or, man's nature may be compared to a tree, with many branches, coming from one root: If the sap in the root be good, there will also be good sap distributed throughout the branches, and the fruit that is brought forth will be good and wholesome; but if the sap in the root and stock be poisonous, so it will be in many branches (as in the other case) and the fruit will be deadly. The tree in both cases may be alike; there may be an exact resemblance in shape; but the difference is found only in eating the fruit. It is thus (in some measure at least) oftentimes between saints and hypocrites. There is sometimes a very

* "Associating with godly men does not prove that a man has grace: Ahithophel was David's companion. Sorrows for the afflictions of the church, and desires for the conversion of souls, do not prove it. These things may be found in carnal men, and so can be no evidences of grace." Stoddard's *Nature of Saving Conversion*, p. 82.

great similitude between true and false experiences, in their appearance, and in what is expressed and related by the subjects of them: And the difference between them is much like the difference between the dreams of Pharaoh's chief butler and baker; they seemed to be much alike, insomuch that when Joseph interpreted the chief butler's dream, that he should be delivered from his imprisonment, and restored to the king's favor, and his honorable office in the palace, the chief baker had raised hopes and expectations, and told his dream also; but he was wofully disappointed; and though his dream was so much like the happy and well boding dream of his companion, yet it was quite contrary in its issue.

VIII. Nothing can certainly be determined concerning the nature of the affections, by this, that comforts and joys seem to follow awakenings and convictions of conscience, in a certain order.

Many persons seem to be prejudiced against affections and experiences that come in such a method, as has been much insisted on by many divines; first, such awakenings, fears, and awful apprehensions, followed with such legal humblings, in a sense of total sinfulness and helplessness, and then, such and such light and comfort: They look upon all such schemes, laying down such methods and steps, to be of men's devising; and particularly if high affections of joy follow great distress and terror, it is made by many an argument against those affections. But such prejudices and objections are without reason or scripture. Surely it cannot be unreasonable to suppose, that before God delivers persons from a state of sin and exposedness to eternal destruction, he should give them some considerable sense of the evil he delivers from; that they may be delivered sensibly, and understand their own salvation, and know something of what God does for them. As men that are saved are in two exceeding different states, first a state of condemnation, and then in a state of justification and blessedness: And as God, in the work of the salvation of mankind, deals with them suitably to their intelligent rational nature; so it seems reasonable, and agreeable to God's wisdom, that men who are saved should be in these two states

sensibly ; first, that they should sensibly to themselves, be in a state of condemnation, and so in a state of woful calamity and dreadful misery, and so afterwards sensibly in a state of deliverance and happiness ; and that they should be first sensible of their absolute extreme necessity, and afterwards of Christ's sufficiency and God's mercy through him.

And that it is God's manner of dealing with men, to " lead them into a wilderness, before he speaks comfortably to them," and so to order it, that they shall be brought into distress, and made to see their own helplessness and absolute dependence on his power and grace, before he appears to work any great deliverance for them, is abundantly manifest by the scripture. Then is God wont to " repent himself for his professing people, when their strength is gone, and there is none shut up or left," and when they are brought to see that their false gods cannot help them, and that the rock in whom they trusted is vain, Deut. xxxii. 36, 37. Before God delivered the children of Israel out of Egypt, they were prepared for it, by being made to see that they were in an evil case," and " to cry unto God, because of their hard bondage," Exod. ii. 23, and v. 19. And before God wrought that great deliverance for them at the Red Sea, they were brought into great distress, the wilderness had shut them in, they could not turn to the right hand nor the left, and the Red Sea was before them, and the great Egyptian host behind, and they were brought to see that they could do nothing to help themselves, and that if God did not help them, they should be immediately swallowed up ; and then God appeared, and turned their cries into songs. So before they were brought to their rest, and to enjoy the milk and honey of Canaan, God " led them through a great and terrible wilderness, that he might humble them and teach them what was in their heart, and so do them good in their latter end," Deut. viii. 2, 16. The woman that had the issue of blood twelve years, was not delivered, until she had first " spent all her living on earthly physicians, and could not be healed of any," and so was left helpless, having no more money to spend ; and then she came to the great Physician, without any money or price, and was

healed by him, Luke viii. 43, 44. Before Christ would answer the request of the woman of Canaan, he first seemed utterly to deny her, and humbled her, and brought her to own herself worthy to be called a dog; and then he shewed her mercy, and received her as a dear child, Mat. xv. 22, &c. The Apostle Paul, before a remarkable deliverance, was "pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that he despaired even of life; but had the sentence of death in himself, that he might not trust in himself, but in God that raiseth the dead," 2 Cor. i. 8, 9, 10. There was first a great tempest, and the ship was covered with the waves, and just ready to sink, and the disciples were brought to cry to Jesus, "Lord, save us, we perish;" and then the winds and seas were rebuked, and there was a great calm, Mat. viii. 24, 25, 26. The leper, before he is cleansed, must have his mouth stopped, by a covering on his upper lip, and was to acknowledge his great misery and utter uncleanness, by rending his clothes, and crying, "Unclean, unclean," Lev. xiii. 45. And backsliding Israel, before God heals them, are brought to "acknowledge that they have sinned, and have not obeyed the voice of the Lord," and to see that "they lie down in their shame, and that confusion covers them," and "that in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, and from the multitude of mountains," and that God only can save them, Jer. iii. 23, 24, 25. Joseph, who was sold by his brethren, and therein was a type of Christ, brings his brethren into great perplexity and distress, and brings them to reflect on their sin, and to say, We are verily guilty; and at last to resign up themselves entirely into his hands for bondmen; and then reveals himself to them, as their brother and their saviour.

And if we consider those extraordinary manifestations which God made of himself to saints of old, we shall find that he commonly first manifested himself in a way which was terrible, and then by those things that were comfortable. So it was with Abraham; first, a horror of great darkness fell upon him, and then God revealed himself to him in sweet promises, Gen. xv. 12, 13. So it was with Moses at Mount Sinai; first, God appeared to him in all the terrors of his

dreadful Majesty, so that Moses said, "I exceedingly fear and quake," and then he made all his goodness to pass before him, and proclaimed his name, "The Lord God gracious and merciful," &c. So it was with Elijah; first, there is a stormy wind, and earthquake, and devouring fire, and then a still, small, sweet voice, 1 Kings xix. So it was with Daniel; he first saw Christ's countenance as lightning, that terrified him, and caused him to faint away; and then he is strengthened and refreshed with such comfortable words as these, "O Daniel, a man greatly beloved," Dan. x. So it was with the apostle John Rev. i. And there is an analogy observable in God's dispensations and deliverances which he works for his people, and the manifestations which he makes of himself to them, both ordinary and extraordinary.

But there are many things in scripture which do more directly shew, that this is God's ordinary manner in working salvation for the souls of men, and in the manifestations God makes of himself and of his mercy in Christ, in the ordinary works of his grace on the hearts of sinners. The servant that owed his prince ten thousand talents, is first held to his debt, and the king pronounces sentence of condemnation upon him, and commands him to be sold, and his wife and children, and payment to be made; and thus he humbles him, and brings him to own the whole of the debt to be just, and then forgives him all. The prodigal son spends all he has, and is brought to see himself in extreme circumstances, and to humble himself, and own his unworthiness, before he is relieved and feasted by his father, Luke xv. Old inveterate wounds must be searched to the bottom, in order to healing: And the scripture compares sin, the wound of the soul, to this, and speaks of healing this wound without thus searching of it, as vain and deceitful, Jer. viii. 11. Christ, in the work of his grace on the hearts of men, is compared to rain on the new mown grass, grass that is cut down with a scythe, Psal. lxxii. 6, representing his refreshing, comforting influences on the wounded spirit. Our first parents, after they had sinned, were first terrified with God's majesty and justice, and had their sin with its aggravations, set before them by their

Judge, before they were relieved by the promise of the seed of the woman. Christians are spoken of as those "that have fled for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before them," Heb. vi. 18, which representation implies great fear and sense of danger, preceding. To the like purpose, Christ is called "a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, and as rivers of water in a dry place, and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land," Isa. xxxii. at the beginning. And it seems to be the natural import of the word *gospel*, glad tidings, that it is news of deliverance and salvation, after great fear and distress. There is also reason to suppose, that God deals with particular believers, as he dealt with his church which he first made to hear his voice in the law, with terrible thunders and lightnings, and kept her under that schoolmaster, to prepare her for Christ; and then comforted her with the joyful sound of the gospel from mount Zion. So likewise John the Baptist came to prepare the way for Christ, and prepare men's hearts for his reception, by shewing them their sins, and by bringing the selfrighteous Jews off from their own righteousness, telling them that they were "a generation of vipers," and shewing them their danger of "the wrath to come," telling them that "the axe was laid at the root of the trees, &c.

And if it be indeed God's manner, (as I think the foregoing considerations shew that it undoubtedly is) before he gives men the comfort of a deliverance from their sin and misery to give them a considerable sense of the greatness and dreadfulness of those evils, and their extreme wretchedness by reason of them; surely it is not unreasonable to suppose, that persons, at least oftentimes, while under these views, should have great distresses and terrible apprehensions of mind; especially if it be considered what these evils are that they have a view of; which are no other than great and manifold sins, against the infinite majesty of the great Jehovah, and the suffering of the fierceness of his wrath to all eternity. And the more so still, when we have many plain instances in scripture of persons that have actually been brought into great distress, by such convictions, before they have received

saving consolations: As the multitude at Jerusalem, who were "pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, men and brethren, what shall we do?" And the apostle Paul, who trembled and was astonished, before he was comforted; and the gaoler, when "he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

From these things it appears to be very unreasonable in professing Christians to make this an objection against the truth and spiritual nature of the comfortable and joyful affections which any have, that they follow such awful apprehensions and distresses as have been mentioned.

And, on the other hand, it is no evidence that comforts and joys are right, because they succeed great terrors, and amazing fears of hell.* This seems to be what some persons lay a great weight upon; esteeming great terrors an evidence of the great work of the law wrought on the heart, well preparing the way for solid comfort; not considering that terror and a conviction of conscience are different things. For though convictions of conscience do often cause terror; yet they do not consist in it; and terrors do often arise from other causes. Convictions of conscience, through the influences of God's Spirit, consist in conviction of sinfulness of heart and practice, and of the dreadfulness of sin, as committed against a God of terrible majesty, infinite holiness and hatred of sin, and strict justice in punishing of it. But there are some persons that have frightful apprehensions of hell, a dreadful pit ready to swallow them up, and flames just ready to lay hold of them, and devils around them, ready to seize them; who at the same time seem to have very little proper enlightenings of conscience, really convincing them of their sinfulness of heart and life. The devil, if permitted, can terrify men

* Mr. Shepard speaks of "men's being cast down as low as hell by sorrow and lying under chains, quaking in apprehension of terror to come, and then raised up to heaven in joy, not able to live; and yet not rent from lust: And such are objects of pity now, and are like to be the objects of terror at the great day." *Parable of the ten Virgins*, P. i. p. 125.

as well as the Spirit of God, it is a work natural to him, and he has many ways of doing it, in a manner tending to no good.

He may exceedingly affright persons, by impressing on them images and ideas of many external things, of a countenance frowning, a sword drawn, black clouds of vengeance, words of an awful doom pronounced,* hell gaping, devils coming, and the like, not to convince persons of things that are true, and revealed in the word of God, but to lead them to vain and groundless determinations; as that their day is past, that they are reprobated, that God is implacable, that he has come to a resolution immediately to cut them off, &c.

And the terrors which some persons have, are very much owing to the particular constitution and temper they are of. Nothing is more manifest than that some persons are of such a temper and frame, that their imaginations are more strongly impressed with every thing they are affected with, than others; and the impression on the imagination reacts on the affection, and raises that still higher; and so affection and imagination act reciprocally, one on another, till their affection is raised to a vast height, and the person is swallowed up, and loses all possession of himself.†

And some speak of a great sight they have of their wickedness, who really, when the matter comes to be well examined into and thoroughly weighed, are found to have little or no convictions of conscience. They tell of a dreadful hard heart, and how their heart lies like a stone; when truly they

* "The way of the Spirit's working when it does convince men, is by enlightening natural conscience. The Spirit does not work by giving a testimony, but by assisting natural conscience to do its work. Natural conscience is the instrument in the hand of God to accuse, condemn, terrify, and to urge to duty. The Spirit of God leads men into the consideration of their danger, and makes them to be affected therewith, Prov. xx. 27. "*The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly.*"
Stoddard's *Guide to Christ*, page 44.

† The famous Mr. Perkins distinguishes between "those sorrows that come through convictions of conscience, and melancholic passions arising only from mere imaginations, strongly conceived in the brain; which, he says, usually come on a sudden, like lightning into a house." Vol. I. of his works, page 385.

have none of those things in their minds or thoughts, wherein the hardness of men's heart does really consist. They tell of a dreadful load and sink of sin; a heap of black and loathsome filthiness within them; when, if the matter be carefully inquired into, they have not in view any thing wherein the corruption of nature does truly consist, nor have they any thought of any particular thing wherein their hearts are sinfully defective, or fall short of what ought to to be in them, or any exercises at all of corruption in them. And many think also they have great convictions of their actual sins, who truly have none. They tell how their sins are set in order before them, they see them stand encompassing them round in a row, with a dreadful frightful appearance; when really they have not so much as one of the sins they have been guilty of in the course of their lives, coming into view, that they are affected with the aggravations of.

And if persons have had great terrors which really have been from the awakening and convincing influences of the Spirit of God, it doth not thence follow that their terrors must needs issue in true comfort. The unmortified corruption of the heart may quench the Spirit of God (after he has been striving) by leading men to presumptuous, and self-exalting hopes and joys, as well as otherwise. It is not every woman who is really in travail, that brings forth a real child; but it may be a monstrous production, without any thing of the form or properties of human nature belonging to it. Pharaoh's chief baker, after he had lain in the dungeon with Joseph, had a vision that raised his hopes, and he was lifted up out of the dungeon, as well as the chief butler; but it was to be hanged.

But if comforts and joys do not only come after great terrors and awakenings, but there be an appearance of such preparatory convictions and humiliations, and brought about very distinctly, by such steps, and in such a method, as has frequently been observable in true converts; this is no certain sign that the light and comforts which follow are true and saving. And for these following reasons:

First, As the devil can counterfeit all the saving operations and graces of the Spirit of God, so he can counterfeit those operations that are preparatory to grace. If Satan can counterfeit those effects of God's Spirit, which are special, divine and sanctifying, so that there shall be a very great resemblance, in all that can be observed by others; much more easily may he imitate those works of God's Spirit which are common, and which men, while they are yet his own children, are the subjects of. These works are in no wise so much above him as the other. There are no works of God that are so high and divine, and above the powers of nature, and out of the reach of the power of all creatures as those works of his Spirit, whereby he forms the creature in his own image, and makes it to be a partaker of the divine nature. But if the devil can be the author of such resemblances of these as have been spoken of, without doubt he may of those that are of an infinitely inferior kind. And it is abundantly evident in fact, that there are false humiliations and false submissions, as well as false comforts.* How far was Saul brought, though a very wicked man, and of a haughty spirit, when he (though a great king) was brought, in conviction of his sin, as it were to fall down, all in tears, weeping aloud, before David his own subject, (and one that he had for a long time mortally hated, and openly treated as an enemy) and condemn himself before him, crying out, "Thou art more righteous than I: For thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil?" And at another time, "I have sinned, I have played the fool, I have erred exceedingly," 1 Sam. xxiv. 16, 17, and chap. xxvi. 21.

* The venerable Mr. Stoddard observes, "A man may say, that now he can justify God however he deals with him, and not be brought off from his own righteousness; and that some men do justify God from a partial conviction of the righteousness of their condemnation; conscience takes notice of their sinfulness, and tells them that they may be righteously damned; as Pharaoh, who justified God, Exod. ix. 27. And they give some kind of consent to it, but many times it does not continue, they have only a pang upon them, that usually dies away after a little time.

Guide to Christ, page 71.

And yet Saul seems then to have had very little of the influences of the Spirit of God, it being after God's Spirit had departed from him, and given him up, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him. And if this proud monarch, in a pang of affection, was brought to humble himself so low before a subject that he hated, and still continued an enemy to, there doubtless may be appearances of great conviction and humiliation in men, before God, while they yet remain enemies to him, and though they finally continue so. There is oftentimes in men who are terrified through fears of hell, a great appearance of their being brought off from their own righteousness, when they are not brought off from it in all ways although they are in many ways that are more plain and visible. They have only exchanged some ways of trusting in their own righteousness, for others that are more secret and subtle. Oftentimes a great degree of discouragement, as to many things they used to depend upon, is taken for humiliation: And that is called a submission to God, which is no absolute submission, but has some secret bargain in it, that it is hard to discover.

Secondly, If the operations and effects of the Spirit of God, in the convictions, and comforts of true converts, may be sophisticated, then the order of them may be imitated. If Satan can imitate the things themselves, he may easily put them one after another, in such a certain order. If the devil can make A, B, and C, it is as easy for him to put A first, and B next, and C next, as to range them in a contrary order. The nature of divine things is harder for the devil to imitate, than their order. He cannot *exactly* imitate divine operations in their nature, though his counterfeits may be very much like them in external appearance; but he can exactly imitate their order. When counterfeits are made, there is no divine power needful in order to the placing one of them first, and another last. And therefore no order or method of operations and experiences is any certain sign of their divinity. That only is to be trusted to, as a certain evidence of grace, which Satan cannot do, and which it is impossible should be brought to pass by any power short of divine.

ception of Christ in the womb of the blessed virgin, by the power of the Holy Ghost, seems to be a designed resemblance of the conception of Christ in the soul of a believer, by the power of the same Holy Ghost. And we know not what is the way of the Spirit, nor how the bones do grow, either in the womb, or heart that conceives this holy child. The new creature may use that language in Psal. cxxxix. 14, 15. "I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvellous are thy works, and that, my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret." Concerning the generation of Christ, both in his person, and also in the hearts of his people, it may be said, as in Isa. liii. 8. "Who can declare his generation?" We know not the works of God, that worketh all. "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing." (Prov. xxv. 2.) and to have "his path as it were in the mighty waters, that his footsteps may not be known;" and especially in the works of his Spirit on the hearts of men, which are the highest and chief of his works. And therefore it is said, Isa. xl. 13. "Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him?" It is to be feared that some have gone too far towards directing the Spirit of the Lord, and marking out his footsteps for him, and limiting him to certain steps and methods. Experience plainly shews, that God's Spirit is unsearchable and untraceable, in some of the best of Christians, in the method of his operations, in their conversion. Nor does the Spirit of God proceed discernibly in the steps of a particular established scheme, one half so often as is imagined. A scheme of what is necessary, and according to a rule already received and established by common opinion, has a vast (though to many a very insensible) influence in forming persons' notions of the steps and method of their own experiences. I know very well what their way is; for I have had much opportunity to observe it. Very often, at first, their experiences appear like a confused chaos, as Mr. Shepard expresses it: But then those passages of their experience are picked out, that have most of the appearance of such particular steps that are insisted on; and these are dwelt upon in the thoughts, and these are told of from

given a fair account of their experiences, and have seemed to be converted according to rule, i. e. with convictions and affections, succeeding distinctly and exactly, in that order and method, which has been ordinarily insisted on, as the order of the operations of the Spirit of God in conversion.

And as a seeming to have this distinctness as to steps and method, is no certain sign that a person is converted; so a being without it, is no evidence that a person is not converted. For though it might be made evident to a demonstration, on scripture principles, that a sinner cannot be brought heartily to receive Christ as his Saviour, who is not convinced of his sin and misery, and of his own emptiness and helplessness, and his just desert of eternal condemnation; and that therefore such convictions must be some way implied in what is wrought in his soul; yet nothing proves it to be necessary, that all those things which are implied or presupposed in an act of faith in Christ, must be plainly and distinctly wrought in the soul, in so many successive and separate works of the Spirit, that shall be each one plain and manifest, in all who are truly converted. On the contrary (as Mr. Shepard observes) sometimes the change made in a saint, at first work, is like a confused chaos; so that the saints know not what to make of it. The manner of the Spirit's proceeding in them that are born of the Spirit, is very often exceeding mysterious and unsearchable: We, as it were, hear the sound of it, the effect of it is discernible; but no man can tell whence it came, or whither it went. And it is oftentimes as difficult to know the way of the Spirit in the new birth, as in the first birth, Eccl. xi. 5. "Thou knowest not what is the way of the Spirit, or how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child; even so thou knowest not the works of God, that worketh all." The ingenerating of a principle of grace in the soul, seems in scripture to be compared to the conceiving of Christ in the womb, Gal. iv. 19. And therefore the church is called Christ's mother, Cant. iii. 11. And so is every particular believer, Mat. xii. 49, 50. And the conception of Christ in the womb of the blessed virgin, by the power of the Holy Ghost seems to be a designed resemblance of the con-

divine nature of the work, *done*, and effect *wrought*, is most clear.

IX. It is no certain sign that the religious affections which persons have are such as have in them the nature of true religion, or that they have not, that they dispose persons to spend much time in religion, and to be zealously engaged in the external duties of worship.

This has, very unreasonably of late been looked upon as an argument against the religious affections which some have had, that they spend so much time in reading, praying, singing, hearing sermons, and the like. It is plain from the scripture, that it is the tendency of true grace to cause persons to delight in such religious exercises. True grace had this effect on Anna the prophetess, Luke ii. 37. "She departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day." And grace had this effect upon the primitive Christians in Jerusalem, Acts ii. 46, 47. "And they continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God." Grace made Daniel delight in the duty of prayer, and solemnly to attend it three times a day; as it also did David, Psal. lv. 17. "Evening, morning, and at noon will I pray." Grace makes the saints delight in singing praises to God, Psal. cxxxv. 3. "Sing praises unto his name, for it is pleasant." And cxlvii. 1. "Praise ye the Lord; for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant, and praise is comely." It also causes them to delight to hear the word of God preached: It makes the gospel a joyful sound to them, Psal. lxxxix. 15, and makes the feet of those who publish these good tidings to be beautiful, Isa. lii. 7. "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings!" &c. It makes them love God's public worship, Psal. xxvi. 8. "Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honor dwelleth." And xxvii. 4. "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple," Psal. lxxxiv. 1, 2, &c.

"How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord.... Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God. Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: They will be still praising thee. Blessed is the man in whose heart are the ways of them, who, passing through the valley of Baca....go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God." ver. 10. "A day in thy courts is better than a thousand."

This is the nature of true grace. But yet, on the other hand, persons' being disposed to abound and to be zealously engaged in the external exercises of religion, and to spend much time in them, is no sure evidence of grace; because such a disposition is found in many that have no grace. So it was with the Israelites of old, whose services were abominable to God; they attended the "new moons, and sabbaths, and calling of assemblies, and spread forth their hands, and made many prayers," Isa. i. 12....15. So it was with the Pharisees; they "made long prayers, and fasted twice a week." False religion may cause persons to be loud and earnest in prayer, Isa. lviii. 4. "Ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to cause your voice to be heard on high." That religion which is not spiritual and saving, may cause men to delight in religious duties and ordinances, Isa. lviii. 2. "Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: They ask of me the ordinances of justice: They take delight in approaching to God." It may cause them to take delight in hearing the word of God preached; as it was with Ezekiel's hearers, Ezek. xxxiii. 31, 32, "And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: For with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness. And lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: For they hear thy words, but

they do them not." So it was with Herod; he heard John the Baptist gladly, Mark vi. 20. So it was with others of his hearers, "for a season they rejoiced in his light," John v. 35. So the stony ground hearers heard the word with joy.

Experience shews, that persons, from false religion, may be inclined to be exceeding abundant in the external exercises of religion; yea, to give themselves up to them, and devote almost their whole time to them. Formerly a sort of people were very numerous in the Romish church, called *recluses*, who forsook the world, and utterly abandoned the society of mankind, and shut themselves up close in a narrow cell, with a vow never to stir out of it, nor to see the face of any of mankind any more (unless that they might be visited in case of sickness) to spend all their days in the exercises of devotion and converse with God. There were also in old time, great multitudes called Hermits and Anchorites, that left the world to spend all their days in lonesome deserts, to give themselves up to religious contemplations and exercises of devotion; some sorts of them having no dwellings, but the caves and vaults of the mountains, and no food, but the spontaneous productions of the earth. I once lived, for many months, next door to a Jew (the houses adjoining one to another) and had much opportunity daily to observe him; who appeared to me the devoutest person that ever I saw in my life; great part of his time being spent in acts of devotion, at his eastern window, which opened next to mine, seeming to be most earnestly engaged, not only in the day time, but sometimes whole nights.

X. Nothing can be certainly known of the nature of religious affections by this, that they much dispose persons with their mouths to praise and glorify God. This indeed is implied in what has been just now observed, of abounding and spending much time in the external exercises of religion, and was also hinted before; but because many seem to look upon it as a bright evidence of gracious affection, when persons appear greatly disposed to praise and magnify God, to have their mouths full of his praises, and affectionately to be

calling on others to praise and extol him, I thought it deserved a more particular consideration.

No Christian will make it an argument against a person, that he seems to have such a disposition. Nor can it reasonably be looked upon as an evidence for a person, if those things that have been already observed and proved, be duly considered, viz. that persons, without grace, may have high affections towards God and Christ, and that their affections, being strong, may fill their mouths, and incline them to speak much, and very earnestly, about the things they are affected with, and that there may be counterfeits of all kinds of gracious affection. But it will appear more evidently and directly, that this is no certain sign of grace, if we consider what instances the scripture gives us of it in those that were graceless. We often have an account of this, in the multitude that were present when Christ preached and wrought miracles, Mark ii. 12. "And immediately he arose, took up his bed, and went forth before them all, insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion." So Mat. ix. 8, and Luke v. 26. Also Mat. xv. 31. "Insomuch that the multitude wondered when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see: And they glorified the God of Israel." So we are told, that on occasion of Christ's raising the son of the widow of Nain, Luke vii. 16. "There came a fear on all: And they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited his people." So we read of their glorifying Christ, or speaking exceeding highly of him, Luke iv. 15. "And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all." And how did they praise him, with loud voices, crying, "Hosanna to the Son of David; Hosanna in the highest; blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord," a little before he was crucified! And after Christ's ascension, when the Apostles had healed the impotent man, we are told, that all men glorified God for that which was done, Acts iv. 21. When the Gentiles in Antioch of Pisidia, heard from Paul and Barnabas, that God would reject the Jews, and take the Gentiles to be his people in their

room, they were affected with the goodness of God to the Gentiles, " and glorified the word of the Lord :" But all that did so were not true believers ; but only a certain elect number of them ; as is intimated in the account we have of it, Acts, xiii. 48. " And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord : And as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed." So of old the children of Israel at the Red Sea, " sang God's praise ; but soon forgat his works." And the Jews in Ezekiel's time, " with their mouth shewed much love, while their heart went after their covetousness." And it is foretold of false professors, and real enemies of religion, that they should shew a forwardness to glorify God, Isa. lxvi. 5. " Hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his word. Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified,"

It is no certain sign that a person is graciously affected, if, in the midst of his hopes and comforts, he is greatly affected with God's unmerited mercy to him that is so unworthy, and seems greatly to extol and magnify free grace. Those that yet remain with unmortified pride and enmity against God, may, when they imagine that they have received extraordinary kindness from God, cry out of their unworthiness, and magnify God's undeserved goodness to them, from no other conviction of their ill deservings, and from no higher principle than Saul had, who, while he yet remained with unsubdued pride and enmity against David, was brought, though a king, to acknowledge his unworthiness, and cry out, " I have played the fool, I have erred exceedingly," and with great affection and admiration, to magnify and extol David's unmerited and unexampled kindness to him, 1 Sam. xxv. 16....19, and xxvi. 21, and from no higher principle than that from whence Nebuchadnezzar was affected with God's dispensations, that he saw and was the subject of, and praises, extols and honors the King of heaven ; and both he, and Darius, in their high affections, call upon all nations to praise God, Dan. iii. 28, 29, 30, and iv. 1, 2, 3, 34, 35, 37, and vi. 25, 26, 27.

XI. It is no sign that affections are right, or that they are wrong, that they make persons that have them exceeding confident that what they experience is divine, and that they are in a good estate.

It is an argument with some, against persons, that they are deluded if they pretend to be assured of their good estate, and to be carried beyond all doubting of the favor of God; supposing that there is no such thing to be expected in the church of God, as a full and absolute assurance of hope; unless it be in some very extraordinary circumstances; as in the case of martyrdom; contrary to the doctrine of Protestants, which has been maintained by their most celebrated writers against the Papists; and contrary to the plainest scripture evidence. It is manifest, that it was a common thing for the saints that we have a history or particular account of in scripture, to be assured. God, in the plainest and most positive manner revealed and testified his special favor to Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Daniel, and others. Job often speaks of his sincerity and uprightness with the greatest imaginable confidence and assurance, often calling God to witness to it; and says plainly, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that I shall see him for myself, and not another," Job. xix. 25, &c. David, throughout the book of Psalms, almost every where speaks without any hesitancy, and in the most positive manner, of God as his God: Glorying in him as his portion and heritage, his rock and confidence, his shield, salvation, and high tower, and the like. Hezekiah appeals to God, as one that knew that he had walked before him in truth, and with a perfect heart, 2 Kings xx. 3. Jesus Christ, in his dying discourse with his eleven disciples, in the 14th, 15th, and 16th chapters of John (which was as it were Christ's last will and testament to his disciples, and to his whole church) often declares his special and everlasting love to them in the plainest and most positive terms; and promises them a future participation with him in his glory, in the most absolute manner; and tells them at the same time that he does so, to the end that their joy might be full, John xv. 11. "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in

you, and that your joy might be full." See also at the conclusion of his whole discourse, chap. xvi. 33. "These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: But be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." Christ was not afraid of speaking too plainly and positively to them; he did not desire to hold them in the least suspense. And he concluded that last discourse of his with a prayer in their presence, wherein he speaks positively to his Father of those eleven disciples, as having all of them savingly known him, and believed in him, and received and kept his word; and that they were not of the world; and that for their sakes he sanctified himself; and that his will was, that they should be with him in his glory; and tells his Father, that he spake those things in his prayer, to the end, that his joy might be fulfilled in them, ver. 13. By these things it is evident, that it is agreeable to Christ's designs, and the contrived ordering and disposition Christ makes of things in his church, that there should be sufficient and abundant provision made, that his saints might have full assurance of their future glory.

The Apostle Paul, through all his epistles speaks in an assured strain; ever speaking positively of his special relation to Christ, his Lord, and Master, and Redeemer, and his interest in, and expectation of the future reward. It would be endless to take notice of all places that might be enumerated: I shall mention but three or four, Gal. ii. 20. "Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me," Phil. i. 21. "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain," 2 Tim. i. 12. "I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day," 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8. "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me at that day.

And the nature of the covenant of grace, and God's declared ends in the appointment and constitution of things in that

covenant, do plainly shew it to be God's design to make ample provision for the saints having an assured hope of eternal life, while living here upon earth. For so are all things ordered and contrived in that covenant, that every thing might be made sure on God's part. "The covenant is ordered in all things and sure:" The promises are most full, and very often repeated, and various ways exhibited; and there are many witnesses, and many seals; and God has confirmed his promises with an oath. And God's declared design in all this, is, that the heirs of the promises might have an undoubting hope and full joy, in an assurance of their future glory. Heb. vi. 17, 18. "Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us." But all this would be in vain, to any such purpose, as the saints' strong consolation, and hope of their obtaining future glory, if their interest in those sure promises in ordinary cases was not ascertainable. For God's promises and oaths, let them be as sure as they will, cannot give strong hope and comfort to any particular person, any further than he can know that those promises are made to him. And in vain is provision made in Jesus Christ, that believers might be perfect as pertaining to the conscience, as is signified, Heb. ix. 9, if assurance of freedom from the guilt of sin is not attainable.

It further appears that assurance is not only attainable in some very extraordinary cases, but that all Christians are directed to give all diligence to make their calling and election sure, and are told how they may do it, 2 Pet. i. 5.....8. And it is spoken of as a thing very unbecoming Christians, and an argument of something very blameable in them, not to know whether Christ be in them or no, 2 Cor. xiii. 5. "Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" And it is implied that it is an argument of a very blameable negligence in Christians, if they practice Christianity after such a manner as to remain uncertain of

the reward, in that 1 Cor. ix. 26. "I therefore so run, as not uncertainly." And to add no more, it is manifest, that Christians' knowing their interest in the saving benefits of Christianity is a thing ordinarily attainable, because the Apostles tell us by what means Christians (and not only apostles and martyrs) were wont to know this, 1 Cor. ii. 12. "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." And 1 John ii. 3. "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments." And ver. 5. "Hereby know we that we are in him." Chap. iii. 14. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren," ver. 19. "Hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him." ver. 24. "Hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us." So Chap. iv. 13, and Chap. v. 2, and ver. 19.

Therefore it must needs be very unreasonable to determine, that persons are hypocrites, and their affections wrong, because they seem to be out of doubt of their own salvation, and the affections they are the subjects of seem to banish all fears of hell.

On the other hand, it is no sufficient reason to determine that men are saints, and their affections gracious, because the affections they have are attended with an exceeding confidence that their state is good, and their affections divine.* Nothing

* "O professor, look carefully to your foundation: "Be not high minded, but fear." You have, it may be, done and suffered many things in and for religion; you have excellent gifts and sweet comforts; a warm zeal for God, and high confidence of your integrity: All this may be right, for ought that I, or (it may be) you know: But yet, it is possible it may be false. You have sometimes judged yourselves, and pronounced yourselves upright; but remember your final sentence is not yet pronounced by your Judge. And what if God weigh you over again, in his more equal balance, and should say, *Mene Tekel*, "Thou art weighed in the balance, and art found wanting?" What a confounded man wilt thou be, under such a sentence! *Quæ splendent in conspectu hominis, sordent in conspectu judicis;* things that are highly esteemed of men, are an abomination in the sight of God: He seeth not as man seeth: Thy heart may be false, and thou not know it: Yea, it may be false, and

can be certainly argued from their confidence, how great and strong soever it seems to be. If we see a man that boldly calls God his Father, and commonly speaks in the most bold, familiar, and appropriating language in prayer, "My Father, my dear Redeemer, my sweet Saviour, my Beloved," and the like; and it is a common thing for him to use the most confident expressions before men, about the goodness of his state; such as, "I know certainly that God is my Father; I know so surely as there is a God in heaven, that he is my God; I know I shall go to heaven, as well as if I were there; I know that God is now manifesting himself to my soul, and is now smiling upon me;" and seems to have done for ever with any inquiry or examination into his state, as a thing sufficiently known, and out of doubt, and to contemn all that so much as intimate or suggest that there is some reason to doubt or fear whether all is right; such things are no signs at all that it is indeed so as he is confident it is.* Such an overbearing, high handed, and violent sort of confidence as this, so affecting to declare itself with a most glaring show in the sight of men, which is to be seen in many, has not the countenance of a true Christian assurance: It savors more of the spirit of the Pharisees, who never doubted but that they were saints, and the most eminent of saints, and were bold to go to God, and come up near to him, and lift up their eyes, and thank him for the great distinction he had made between them and

thou strongly confident of its integrity." *Flavel's Touchstone of Sincerity*, Chap. ii. Sect. 5.

"Some hypocrites are a great deal more confident than many saints." *Stoddard's Discourse on the way to know sincerity and hypocrisy*, p. 128.

* "Doth the work of faith in some believers, bear upon its top branches, the full ripe fruits of a blessed assurance? Lo, what strong confidence, and high built persuasions, of an interest in God, have sometimes been found in unsanctified ones! Yea, so strong may this false assurance be, that they dare boldly venture to go to the judgment seat of God, and there defend it. Doth the Spirit of God fill the heart of the assured believer with joy unspeakable, and full of glory, giving him, through faith, a prelibation or foretaste of heaven itself, in those first fruits of it? How near to this comes what the Apostle supposes may be found in apostates!" *Flavel's Husbandry spiritualised*, Chap. xii.

other men ; and when Christ intimated that they were blind and graceless, despised the suggestion, John ix. 40. " And some of the Pharisees which were with him, heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also ?" If they had more of the spirit of the publican, with their confidence, who, in a sense of his exceeding unworthiness, stood afar off, and durst not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven, but smote on his breast, and cried out of himself as a sinner, their confidence would have more of the aspect of the confidence of one that humbly trusts and hopes in Christ, and has no confidence in himself.

If we do but consider what the hearts of natural men are, what principles they are under the dominion of, what blindness and deceit, what self flattery, self exaltation, and self confidence reign there, we need not at all wonder that their high opinion of themselves, and confidence of their happy circumstances, be as high and strong as mountains, and as violent as a tempest, when once conscience is blinded, and convictions killed, with false high affections, and those forementioned principles let loose, fed up and prompted by false joys and comforts, excited by some pleasing imaginations, impressed by Satan, transforming himself into an angel of light.

When once a hypocrite is thus established in a false hope, he has not those things to cause him to call his hope in question, that oftentimes are the occasion of the doubting of true saints ; as, *first*, he has not that cautious spirit, that great sense of the vast importance of a sure foundation, and that dread of being deceived. The comforts of the true saints increase awakening and caution, and a lively sense how great a thing it is to appear before an infinitely holy, just and omniscient Judge. But false comforts put an end to these things and dreadfully stupify the mind. *Secondly*, The hypocrite has not the knowledge of his own blindness, and the deceitfulness of his own heart, and that mean opinion of his own understanding, that the true saint has. Those that are deluded with false discoveries and affections, are evermore highly conceited of their light and understanding. *Thirdly*, The

devil does not assault the hope of the hypocrite, as he does the hope of a true saint. The devil is a great enemy to a true Christian hope, not only because it tends greatly to the comfort of him that hath it, but also because it is a thing of a holy, heavenly nature, greatly tending to promote and cherish grace in the heart, and a great incentive to strictness and diligence in the Christian life. But he is no enemy to the hope of a hypocrite, which above all things establishes his interest in him that has it. A hypocrite may retain his hope without opposition, as long as he lives, the devil never disturbing it, nor attempting to disturb it. But there is perhaps no true Christian but what has his hope assaulted by him. Satan assaulted Christ himself upon this, whether he were the Son of God or no: And the servant is not above his Master, nor the disciple above his Lord; it is enough for the disciple, that is most privileged in this world, to be as his Master. *Fourthly*, He who has a false hope, has not that sight of his own corruptions, which the saint has. A true Christian has ten times so much to do with his heart and its corruptions, as an hypocrite: And the sins of his heart and practice, appear to him in their blackness; they look dreadful; and it often appears a very mysterious thing, that any grace can be consistent with such corruption, or should be in such a heart. But a false hope hides corruption, covers it all over, and the hypocrite looks clean and bright in his own eyes.

There are two sorts of hypocrites: One that are deceived with their outward morality and external religion; many of whom are professed Arminians, in the doctrine of justification: And the other, are those that are deceived with false discoveries and elevations; who often cry down works, and men's own righteousness, and talk much of free grace; but at the same time make a righteousness of their discoveries and of their humiliation, and exalt themselves to heaven with them. These two kinds of hypocrites, Mr. Shepard, in his exposition of the Parable of the ten virgins, distinguishes by the names of *legal* and *evangelical* hypocrites; and often speaks of the latter as the worst. And it is evident that the latter are commonly by far the most confident in their hope and

with the most difficulty brought off from it: I have scarcely known the instance of such an one, in my life, that has been undeceived. The chief grounds of the confidence of many of them, are the very same kind of impulses and supposed revelations (sometimes with texts of scripture, and sometimes without) that so many of late have had concerning future events; calling these impulses about their good estate, the witness of the Spirit; entirely misunderstanding the nature of the witness of the Spirit, as I shall shew hereafter. Those that have had visions and impulses about other things, it has generally been to reveal such things as they are desirous and fond of: And no wonder that persons who give heed to such things, have the same sort of visions or impressions about their own eternal salvation, to reveal to them that their sins are forgiven them, that their names are written in the book of life, that they are in high favor with God, &c. and especially when they earnestly seek, expect, and wait for evidence of their election and salvation this way, as the surest and most glorious evidence of it. Neither is it any wonder, that when they have such a supposed revelation of their good estate, it raises in them the highest degree of confidence of it. It is found by abundant experience, that those who are led away by impulses and imagined revelations, are extremely confident: They suppose that the great Jehovah has declared these and those things to them; and having his immediate testimony, a strong confidence is the highest virtue. Hence they are bold to say, I know this or that....I know certainly....I am as sure as that I have a being, and the like; and they despise all argument and inquiry in the case. And above all things else, it is easy to be accounted for, that impressions and impulses about that which is so pleasing, so suiting their self love and pride, as their being the dear children of God, distinguished from most in the world in his favor, should make them strongly confident; especially when with their impulses and revelations they have high affections, which they take to be the most eminent exercises of grace. I have known of several persons, that have had a fond desire of something of a temporal nature, through a violent passion that has possessed them

and they have been earnestly pursuing the thing they have desired should come to pass, and have met with great difficulty and many discouragements in it, but at last have had an impression, or supposed revelation, that they should obtain what they sought; and they have looked upon it as a sure promise from the Most High, which has made them most ridiculously confident, against all manner of reason to convince them to the contrary, and all events working against them. And there is nothing hinders, but that persons who are seeking their salvation, may be deceived by the like delusive impressions, and be made confident of that, the same way.

The confidence of many of this sort of hypocrites, that Mr. Shepard calls *evangelical hypocrites*, is like the confidence of some mad men, who think they are kings; they will maintain it against all manner of reason and evidence. And in one sense, it is much more immoveable than a truly gracious assurance; a true assurance is not upheld, but by the soul's being kept in a holy frame, and grace maintained in lively exercise. If the actings of grace do much decay in the Christian, and he falls into a lifeless frame, he loses his assurance: But this kind of confidence of hypocrites will not be shaken by sin; they (at least some of them) will maintain their boldness in their hope, in the most corrupt frames and wicked ways; which is a sure evidence of their delusion.*

And here I cannot but observe, that there are certain doctrines often preached to the people, which need to be delivered with more caution and explanation than they frequently

* Mr. Shepard speaks of it, a "presumptuous peace, that is not interrupted and broke by evil works." And says, That "the spirit will sigh, and not sing in that bosom, whence corrupt dispositions and passions break out." And that "though men in such frames may seem to maintain the consolation of the spirit, and not suspect their hypocricy, under pretence of trusting the Lord's mercy; yet they cannot avoid the condemnation of the world." *Parable of the ten virgins*, Part I. p. 139.

Dr. Ames speaks of it as a thing, by which the peace of a wicked man may be distinguished from the peace of a godly man, "that the peace of a wicked man continues, whether he performs the duties of piety and righteousness, or no; provided those crimes are avoided that appear horrid to nature itself." *Cases of conscience, lib.* III. Chap. vii.

are ; for, as they are by many understood, they tend greatly to establish this delusion and false confidence of hypocrites. The doctrines I speak of are those of "Christians living by faith, not by sight; their giving glory to God, by trusting him in the dark ; living upon Christ, and not upon experiences ; not making their good frames the foundation of their faith :" Which are excellent and important doctrines indeed, rightly understood, but corrupt and destructive, as many understand them. The scripture speaks of living or walking by faith, and not by sight, in no other way than these, viz. a being governed by arespect to eternal things, that are the objects of faith, and are not seen, and not by a respect to temporal things, which are seen ; and believing things revealed, that we never saw with bodily eyes ; and also living by faith in the promise of future things, without yet seeing or enjoying the things promised, or knowing the way how they can be fulfilled. This will be easily evident to any one who looks over the scriptures, which speak of *faith* in opposition to *sight ;* as 2 Cor. iv. 18, and v. 7. Heb. xi. 1, 8, 13, 17, 27, 29. Rom. viii. 24. John xx. 29. But this doctrine, as it is understood by many, is, that Christians ought firmly to believe and trust in Christ, without spiritual sight or light, and although they are in a dark dead frame, and, for the present, have no spiritual experiences or discoveries. And it is truly the duty of those who are thus in darkness, to come out of darkness into light and believe. But that they should confidently believe and trust, while they yet remain without spiritual light or sight, is an antiscriptural and absurd doctrine. The scripture is ignorant of any such faith in Christ of the operation of God, that is not founded in a spiritual sight of Christ. That believing on Christ, which accompanies a title to everlasting life, is a "seeing the Son, and believing on him," John vi. 40. True faith in Christ is never exercised, any further than persons "behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord, and have the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," 2 Cor. iii. 18, and iv. 6. They into whose minds "the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, does not shine, believe not," 2 Cor. iv. 4. That faith, which is with-

out spiritual light, is not the faith of the children of the light, and of the day; but the presumption of the children of darkness. And therefore to press and urge them to believe, without any spiritual light or sight, tends greatly to help forward the delusions of the prince of darkness. Men not only cannot exercise faith without some spiritual light, but they can exercise faith only just in such proportion as they have spiritual light. Men will trust in God no further than they know him; and they cannot be in the exercise of faith in him one ace further than they have a sight of his fulness and faithfulness in exercise. Nor can they have the exercise of trust in God, any further than they are in a gracious frame. They that are in a dead carnal frame, doubtless ought to trust in God; because that would be the same thing as coming out of their bad frame, and turning to God; but to exhort men confidently to trust in God, and so hold up their hope and peace, though they are not in a gracious frame, and continue still to be so, is the same thing in effect, as to exhort them confidentially to trust in God, but not with a gracious trust: And what is that but a wicked presumption? It is just as impossible for men to have a strong or lively trust in God, when they have no lively exercises of grace, or sensible Christian experiences, as it is for them to be in the lively exercises of grace, without the exercises of grace.

It is true, that it is the duty of God's people to trust in him when in darkness, and though they remain still in darkness, in that sense, that they ought to trust in God when the aspects of his providence are dark, and look as though God had forsaken them, and did not hear their prayers, and many clouds gather, and many enemies surround them, with a formidable aspect, threatening to swallow them up, and all events of providence seem to be against them, all circumstances seem to render the promises of God difficult to be fulfilled, and God must be trusted out of sight, i. e. when we cannot see which way it is possible for him to fulfil his word, every thing but God's mere word, makes it look unlikely, so that if persons believe, they must hope against hope. Thus the ancient Patriarchs, and Job, and the Psalmist, and Jeremiah, Daniel, Shad-

rach, Meshech, and Abednego, and the Apostle Paul, gave glory to God by trusting in God in darkness. And we have many instances of such a glorious victorious faith in the eleventh of the Hebrews. But how different a thing is this, from trusting in God, without spiritual sight, and being at the same time in a dead and carnal frame!

There is also such a thing as spiritual light's being let into the soul in one way, when it is not in another; and so there is such a thing as the saints trusting in God, and also knowing their good estate, when they are destitute of some kinds of experience. As for instance, they may have clear views of God's sufficiency and faithfulness, and so confidently trust in him, and know that they are his children; and at the same time, not have those clear and sweet ideas of his love, as at other times: For it was thus with Christ himself in his last passion. And they may have views of much of God's sovereignty, holiness, and all sufficiency, enabling them quietly to submit to him, and exercise a sweet and most encouraging hope in God's fulness, when they are not satisfied of their own good estate. But how different things are these, from confidently trusting in God, without spiritual light or experience!

Those that thus insist on persons living by faith, when they have no experience, and are in very bad frames, are also very absurd in their notions of faith. What they mean by faith is, believing that they are in a good estate. Hence they count it a dreadful sin for them to doubt of their state, whatever frames they are in, and whatever wicked things they do, because it is the great and heinous sin of unbelief; and he is the best man, and puts most honor upon God, that maintains his hope of his good estate the most confidently and immoveably, when he has the least light or experience; that is to say, when he is in the worst and most wicked frame and way; because, forsooth, that is a sign that he is strong in faith, giving glory to God, and against hope believes in hope. But what Bible do they learn this notion of faith out of, that it is a man's confidently believing that he is in a good estate?* If this be

* "Men do not know that they are godly by believing that they are godly. We know many things by faith Heb. xi. 3. "By faith we under-

faith, the Pharisees had faith in an eminent degree; some of which, Christ teaches, committed the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost. The scripture represents faith, as that by which men are brought into a good estate; and therefore it cannot be the same thing, as believing that they are already in a good estate. To suppose that faith consists in persons believing that they are in a good estate, is in effect the same thing, as to suppose that faith consists in a person's believing that he has faith, or believing that he believes.

Indeed persons doubting of their good estate, may in several respects arise from unbelief. It may be from unbelief, or because they have so little faith that they have so little evidence of their good estate: If they had more experience of the actings of faith, and so more experience of the exercise of grace, they would have clearer evidence that their state was good; and so their doubts would be removed. And then their doubting of their state may be from unbelief thus, when, though there be many things that are good evidences of a work of grace in them, yet they doubt very much whether they are really in a state of favor with God, because it is they, those that are so unworthy, and have done so much to provoke God to anger against them. Their doubts in such a case arise from unbelief, as they arise from want of a sufficient sense of, and reliance on, the infinite riches of God's grace, and the sufficiency of Christ for the chief of sinners. They may also be from unbelief, when they doubt of their state, because of the mystery of God's dealings with them; they are not able to reconcile such dispensations with God's favor to them; or when they doubt whether they have any interest in the promises, because the promises from the aspect of provi-

stand that the worlds were made by the word of God. Faith is the evidence of things not seen," Heb. xi. 1. Thus men know the Trinity of persons of the Godhead; that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; that he that believes in him will have eternal life; the resurrection of the dead. And if God should tell a saint that he hath grace, he might know it by believing the word of God. But it is not this way, that godly men do know that they have grace. It is not revealed in the word, and the Spirit of God doth not testify it to particular persons." *Stoddard's nature of saving conversion*, p. 83, 84.

dence appear so unlikely to be fulfilled; the difficulties that are in the way, are so many and great. Such doubting arises from want of dependence upon God's almighty power, and his knowledge and wisdom, as infinitely above theirs. But yet, in such persons, their unbelief, and their doubting of their state, are not the same thing; though one arises from the other.

Persons may be greatly to blame for doubting of their state, on such grounds as these last mentioned; and they may be to blame, that they have no more grace, and no more of the present exercises and experiences of it, to be an evidence to them of the goodness of their state: Men are doubtless to blame for being in a dead, carnal frame; but when they are in such a frame, and have no sensible experience of the exercises of grace, but on the contrary, are much under the prevalence of their lusts and an unchristian spirit, they are not to blame for doubting of their state. It is as impossible, in the nature of things, that a holy and Christian hope should be kept alive, in its clearness and strength, in such circumstances, as it is to keep the light in the room, when the candle is put out; or to maintain the bright sunshine in the air, when the sun is gone down. Distant experiences, when darkened by present prevailing lust and corruption, never keep alive a gracious confidence and assurance; but that sickens and decays upon it, as necessarily as a little child by repeated blows on the head with a hammer. Nor is it at all to be lamented, that persons doubt of their state in such circumstances: But, on the contrary, it is desirable and every way best that they should. It is agreeable to that wise and merciful constitution of things, which God hath established, that it should be so. For so hath God contrived and constituted things, in his dispensations towards his own people, that when their love decays, and the exercises of it fail, or become weak, fear should arise; for then they need it to restrain them from sin, and to excite them to care for the good of their souls, and so to stir them up to watchfulness and diligence in religion: But God hath so ordered, that when love rises, and is in vigorous exercise, then fear should vanish, and be driven away; for

then they need it not, having a higher and more excellent principle in exercise, to restrain them from sin, and stir them up to their duty. There are no other principles, which human nature is under the influence of, that will ever make men conscientious, but one of these two, *fear* or *love*; and therefore, if one of these should not prevail as the other decays, God's people, when fallen into dead and carnal frames, when love is asleep, would be lamentably exposed indeed: And therefore God has wisely ordained, that these two opposite principles of love and fear should rise and fall, like the two opposite scales of a balance; when one rises the other sinks. As light and darkness necessarily and unavoidably succeed each other; if light prevails, so much does darkness cease, and no more; and if light decays, so much does darkness prevail; so it is in the heart of a child of God: If divine love decays and falls asleep, and lust prevails, the light and joy of hope go out, and dark fear and doubting arises; and if, on the contrary, divine love prevails and comes into lively exercise, this brings in the brightness of hope, and drives away black lust, and fear with it. Love is the spirit of adoption, or the childlike principle; if that slumbers, men fall under fear, which is the spirit of bondage, or the servile principle; and so on the contrary. And if it be so, that love, or the spirit of adoption, be carried to a great height, it quite drives away all fear, and gives full assurance; agreeable to that of the apostle, 1 John iv. 18. "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear." These two opposite principles of lust and holy love, bring hope and fear into the hearts of God's children, in proportion as they prevail; that is, when left to their own natural influence, without something adventitious, or accidental intervening; as the distemper of melancholy, doctrinal ignorance, prejudices of education, wrong instruction, false principles, peculiar temptations, &c.

Fear is cast out by the Spirit of God, no other way than by the prevailing of love; nor is it ever maintained by his Spirit but when love is asleep. At such a time, in vain is all the saint's selfexaminations, and poring on past experience, in order to establish his peace, and get assurance. For it is con-

trary to the nature of things, as God hath constituted them, that he should have assurance at such a time.

They therefore do directly thwart God's wise and gracious constitution of things, who exhort others to be confident in their hope, when in dead frames; under a notion of "living by faith, and not by sight, and trusting God in the dark, and living upon Christ, and not upon experiences;" and warn them not to doubt of their good estate, lest they should be guilty of the dreadful sin of unbelief. And it has a direct tendency to establish the most presumptuous hypocrites, and to prevent their ever calling their state in question, how much soever wickedness rages, and reigns in their hearts, and prevails in their lives; under a notion of honoring God, by hoping against hope, and confidently trusting in God, when things look very dark. And doubtless vast has been the mischief that has been done this way.

Persons cannot be said to forsake Christ, and live on their experiences of the exercises of grace, merely because they take them and use them as evidences of grace; for there are no other evidences that they can or ought to take. But then may persons be said to live upon their experiences, when they make a righteousness of them, and instead of keeping their eye on God's glory and Christ's excellency, they turn their eyes off these objects without them, on to themselves, to entertain their minds, by viewing their own attainments, and high experiences, and the great things they have met with, and are bright and beautiful in their own eyes, and are rich and increased with goods in their own apprehensions, and think that God has as admiring an esteem of them, on the same account, as they have of themselves: This is living on experiences, and not on Christ; and is more abominable in the sight of God, than the gross immoralities of those who make no pretences to religion. But this is a far different thing from a mere improving experiences as evidences of an interest in a glorious Redeemer.

But to return from this digression, I would mention one thing more under the general head that I am upon.

XII. Nothing can be certainly concluded concerning the nature of religious affections, that any are the subjects of, from this, that the outward manifestations of them, and the relation persons give of them, are very affecting and pleasing to the truly godly, and such as greatly gain their charity, and win their hearts.

The true saints have not such a spirit of discerning that they can certainly determine who are godly, and who are not. For though they know experimentally what true religion is, in the internal exercises of it; yet these are what they can neither feel, nor see, in the heart of another.* There is nothing in others, that comes within their view, but outward manifestations and appearances; but the scripture plainly intimates, that this way of judging what is in men by outward appearances, is at best uncertain, and liable to deceit, 1 Sam. xvi. 7. "The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart," Isa. xi. 3. "He shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears.† They commonly are but poor judges, and dangerous counsellors in soul cases, who are quick and peremptory in determining persons' states, vaunting themselves in their extraordinary faculty of discerning and distinguishing, in these great affairs;

* Men may have the knowledge of their own conversion: The knowledge that other men have of it is uncertain, because no man can look into the heart of another and see the workings of grace there." *Stoddard's Nature of Saving Conversion*, chap. xv. at the beginning.

† "Mr. Stoddard observes, That "all visible signs are common to converted and unconverted men; and a relation of experiences, among the rest." *Appeal to the learned*, p. 75.

"O how hard it is for the eye of man to discern betwixt chaff and wheat! And how many upright hearts are now censured, whom God will clear? How many false hearts are now approved whom God will condemn? Men ordinarily have no convictive proofs, but only probable symptoms; which at most beget but a conjectural knowledge of another's state. And they that shall peremptorily judge either way, may possibly wrong the generation of the upright, or on the other side, absolve and justify the wicked. And truly, considering what hath been said, it is no wonder that dangerous mistakes are so frequently made in this matter." *Flavel's husbandry spiritualized*, chap. xii.

as though all was open and clear to them.' They betray one of these three things: Either that they have had but little experience; or are persons of a weak judgment; or that they have a great degree of pride and selfconfidence, and so ignorance of themselves. Wise and experienced men will proceed with great caution in such an affair.

When there are many probable appearances of piety in others, it is the duty of the saints to receive them cordially into their charity, and to love them and rejoice in them, as their brethren in Christ Jesus. But yet the best of men may be deceived, when the appearances seem to them exceeding fair and bright, even so as entirely to gain their charity, and conquer their hearts. It has been a common thing in the church of God, for such bright professors, that are received as eminent saints, among the saints, to fall away and come to nothing.* And this we need not wonder at, if we consider the things that have been already observed; what things it has been shown, may appear in men who are altogether graceless. Nothing hinders but that all these things may meet together in men, and yet they be without a spark of grace in their hearts. They may have religious affections of many kinds together; they may have a sort of affection towards God, that bears a great resemblance of dear love to him; and

* "Be not offended, if you see great cedars fall, stars fall from heaven, great professors die and decay: Do not think they be all such: Do not think that the elect shall fall. Truly, some are such that when they fall, one would think a man truly sanctified might fall away, as the Arminians think; 1 John ii. 19. *They were not of us.* I speak this, because the Lord is shaking; and I look for great apostacies: For God is trying all his friends, through all the Christian world. In Germany what profession was there! Who would have thought it? The Lord, who delights to manifest that openly, which was hid secretly, sends a sword and they fall." *Shepard's Parab.* Part. I. p. 118, 119.

"The saints may approve thee and God condemn thee. Rev. iii. 1. "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." Men may say, There is a true Nathanael; and God may say, There is a self cozening Pharisee. Reader, thou hast heard of Judas and Demas, of Ananias and Sapphira, of Hymeneus and Philetus, once renowned and famous professors, and thou hast heard how they proved at last." *Flavel's Touchstone of Sincerity*, Chap. ii. Sect. 5.

so a kind of love to the brethren, and great appearances of admiration of God's perfections and works, and sorrow for sin, and reverence, submission, self abasement, gratitude, joy, religious longings, and zeal for religion and the good of souls. And these affections may come after great awakenings and convictions of conscience; and there may be great appearances of a work of humiliation: And counterfeit love and joy, and other affections may seem to follow these, and one another, just in the same order that is commonly observable in the holy affections of true converts. And these religious affections may be carried to a great height, and may cause abundance of tears, yea, may overcome the nature of those who are the subjects of them, and may make them affectionate, and fervent, and fluent, in speaking of the things of God, and dispose them to be abundant in it; and may be attended with many sweet texts of scripture, and precious promises, brought with great impression on their minds; and may dispose them with their mouths to praise and glorify God, in a very ardent manner, and fervently to call upon others to praise him, crying out of their unworthiness, and extolling free grace. And may, moreover, dispose them to abound in the external duties of religion, such as prayer, hearing the word preached, singing, and religious conference; and these things attended with a great resemblance of a Christian assurance, in its greatest height, when the saints mount on eagles' wings, above all darkness and doubting. I think it has been made plain, that there may be all these things, and yet there be nothing more than the common influences of the Spirit of God, joined with the delusions of Satan, and the wicked and deceitful heart.... To which I may add, that all these things may be attended with a sweet natural temper, and a good doctrinal knowledge of religion, and a long acquaintance with the saint's way of talking, and of expressing their affections and experiences, and a natural ability and subtilty in accommodating their expressions and manner of speaking to the dispositions and notions of the hearers, and a taking decency of expression and behavior, formed by a good education. How great therefore may the resemblance be, as to all outward expressions and

appearances, between an hypocrite and a true saint! Doubtless it is the glorious prerogative of the omniscient God, as the great searcher of hearts, to be able well to separate between sheep and goats. And what an indecent, self exaltation, and arrogance it is, in poor, fallible, dark mortals, to pretend that they can determine and know, who are really sincere and upright before God, and who are not?

Many seem to lay great weight on that, and to suppose it to be what may determine them with respect to other's real piety, when they not only tell a plausible story, but when, in giving an account of their experiences, they make such a representation, and speak after such a manner, that they feel their talk; that is to say, when their talk seems to harmonize with their own experience, and their hearts are touched and affected and delighted, by what they hear them say, and drawn out by it, in dear love to them. But there is not that certainty in such things, and that full dependence to be had upon them, which many imagine. A true saint greatly delights in holiness; it is a most beautiful thing in his eyes; and God's work, in savingly renewing and making holy and happy, a poor, and before perishing soul, appears to him a most glorious work: No wonder, therefore, that his heart is touched, and greatly affected, when he hears another give a probable account of this work, wrought on his own heart, and when he sees in him probable appearances of holiness; whether those pleasing appearances have any thing real to answer them, or no. And if he uses the same words, which are commonly made use of, to express the affections of true saints, and tells of many things following one another in an order, agreeable to the method of the experience of him that hears him, and also speaks freely and boldly, and with an air of assurance; no wonder the other thinks his experiences harmonize with his own. And if, besides all this, in giving his relation, he speaks with much affection; and, above all, if in speaking he seems to shew much affection to him to whom he speaks, such an affection as the Galatians did to the Apostle Paul; these things will naturally have a powerful influence, to affect and draw his hearer's heart, and open wide the

doors of his charity towards him. David speaks as one who had felt Ahithophel's talk, and had once a sweet savor and relish of it. And therefore exceeding great was his surprise and disappointment, when he fell; it was almost too much for him, Psal. lv. 12, 13, 14. "It was not an enemy.... then I could have borne it; but it was thou, a man, mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance: We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company."

It is with professors of religion, especially such as become so in a time of outpouring of the Spirit of God, as it is with blossoms in the spring;* there are vast numbers of them upon the trees, which all look fair and promising; but yet many of them never come to any thing. And many of those, that in a little time wither up, and drop off, and rot under the trees; yet for a while look as beautiful and gay as others; and not only so, but smell sweet, and send forth a pleasant odor; so that we cannot, by any of our senses, certainly distinguish those blossoms which have in them that secret virtue, which will afterwards appear in the fruit, and that inward solidity and strength which shall enable them to bear, and cause them to be perfected by the hot summer sun, that will dry up the others. It is the mature fruit which comes afterwards, and not the beautiful colors and smell of the blossoms, that we must judge by. So new converts, (professedly so) in their talk about things of religion, may appear fair, and be very savory, and the saints may think they talk feelingly. They may relish their talk, and imagine they perceive a divine savor in it, and yet all may come to nothing.

It is strange how hardly men are brought to be contented with the rules and directions Christ has given them, but they must needs go by other rules of their own inventing, that seem to them wiser and better. I know of no directions or

* A time of outpouring of the Spirit of God, reviving religion, and producing the pleasant appearances of it, in new converts, is in scripture compared to this very thing, viz. the spring season, when the benign influences of the heavens cause the blossoms to put forth. Cant. ii. 11, 12.

counsels which Christ ever delivered more plainly, than the rules he has given us, to guide us in our judging of others' sincerity, viz. that we should judge of the tree chiefly by the fruit: But yet this will not do; but other ways are found out, which are imagined to be more distinguishing and certain. And woful have been the mischievous consequences of this arrogant setting up men's wisdom above the wisdom of Christ. I believe many saints have gone much out of the way of Christ's word, in this respect: And some of them have been chastised with whips, and (I had almost said) scorpions, to bring them back again. But many things which have lately appeared, and do now appear, may convince, that ordinarily those who have gone farthest this way, that have been most highly conceited of their faculty of discerning, and have appeared most forward, peremptorily and suddenly to determine the state of men's souls, have been hypocrites, who have known nothing of true religion.

In the parable of the wheat and tares, it is said, Mat. xiii. 26. "When the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also." As though the tares were not discerned, nor distinguishable from the wheat, until then, as Mr. Flavel observes,* who mentions it as an observation of Jerome's, that "wheat and tares are so much alike, until the blade of the wheat comes to bring forth the ear, that it is next to impossible to distinguish them." And then, Mr. Flavel adds, "How difficult soever it be to discern the difference between wheat and tares; yet doubtless the eye of sense can much easier discriminate them, than the most quick and piercing eye of man can discern the difference between special and common grace. For all saving graces in the saints, have their counterfeits in hypocrites; there are similar works in those, which a spiritual and very judicious eye may easily mistake for the saving and genuine effects of a sanctifying spirit."

As it is the ear or the fruit which distinguishes the wheat from the tares, so this is the true Shibboleth, that he who

* Husbandry spiritualized, Chap. xii.

stands as judge at the passages of Jordan, makes use of to distinguish those that shall pass over Jordan into the true Canaan, from those that should be slain at the passages. For the Hebrew word Shibboleth signifies an ear of corn. And perhaps the more full pronunciation of Jephthah's friends, Shibboleth, may represent a full ear with fruit in it, typifying the fruits of the friends of Christ, the antitype of Jephthah; and the more lean pronunciation of the Ephraimites, his enemies, may represent their empty ears, typifying the show of religion in hypocrites, without substance and fruit. This is agreeable to the doctrine we are abundantly taught in scripture, viz. That he who is set to judge those that pass through death, whether they have a right to enter into the heavenly Canaan or no, or whether they should not be slain, will judge every man according to his works.

We seem to be taught the same things, by the rules given for the priest's discerning the leprosy. In many cases it was impossible for the priest to determine whether a man had the leprosy, or whether he were clean, by the most narrow inspection of the appearances that were upon him, until he had waited to see what the appearances would come to, and had shut up the person who shewed himself to him, one seven days after another; and when he judged, he was to determine by the hair, which grew out of the spot that was shewed him, which was as it were the fruit that it brought forth.

And here, before I finish what I have to say under this head, I would say something to a strange notion some have of late been led away with, of certainly knowing the good estate that others are in, as though it were immediately revealed to them from heaven, by their love flowing out to them in an extraordinary manner. They argue thus, that their love being very sensible and great, it may be certainly known by them who feel it, to be a true Christian love: And if it be a true Christian love, the Spirit of God must be the author of it: And inasmuch as the Spirit of God who knows certainly, whether others are the children of God or no, and is a spirit of truth, is pleased by an uncommon influence upon them, to

cause their love to flow out, in an extraordinary manner, towards such a person as a child of God; it must needs be, that this infallible Spirit, who deceives none, knows that that person is a child of God. But such persons might be convinced of the falseness of their reasoning, if they would consider whether or no it be not their duty, and what God requires of them, to love those as the children of God who they think are the children of God, and whom they have no reason to think otherwise of, from all that they can see in them, though God, who searches the hearts, knows them not to be his children.

If it be their duty, then it is good, and the want of it sin; and therefore surely the Spirit of God may be the author of it: The Spirit of God, without being a spirit of falsehood, may in such a case assist a person to do his duty, and keep him from sin. But then they argue from the uncommon degree and special manner, in which their love flows out to the person, which they think the Spirit of God never would cause, if he did not know the object to be a child of God. But then I would ask them, whether or no it is not their duty to love all such as they are bound to think are the children of God, from all that they can see in them, to a very great degree, though God, from other things which he sees, that are out of sight to them, knows them not to be so. It is men's duty to love all whom they are bound in charity to look upon as the children of God, with a vastly dearer affection than they commonly do. As we ought to love Christ to the utmost capacity of our nature, so it is our duty to love those who we think are so near and dear to him as his members, with an exceeding dear affection, as Christ has loved us; and therefore it is sin in us not to love them so. We ought to pray to God that he would by his Spirit keep us from sin, and enable us to do our duty: And may not his Spirit answer our prayers, and enable us to do our duty, in a particular instance, without lying? If he cannot, then the Spirit of God is bound not to help his people to do their duty in some instances, because he cannot do it without being a spirit of falsehood. But surely God is so sovereign as that comes to, that he may enable us to do our duty when he pleases, and on what occasion he pleases. When

persons think others are his children, God may have other ends in causing their exceedingly endeared love to flow out to them, besides revealing to them whether their opinion of them be right or no: He may have that merciful end in it, to enable them to know their duty, and to keep them from that dreadful infinite evil, sin. And will they say God shall not shew them that mercy in such a case? If I am at a distance from home, and hear, that in my absence my house is burnt, but my family have, in some extraordinary manner, all escaped the flames; and every thing in the circumstances of the story, as I hear it, makes it appear very credible, it would be sin in me, in such a case, not to feel a very great degree of gratitude to God, though the story indeed be not true. And is not God so sovereign, that he may, if he pleases, shew me that mercy on that occasion, and enable me to do my duty in a much further degree than I used to do it, and yet not incur the charge of deceitfulness in confirming a falsehood?

It is exceeding manifest, that error or mistake may be the occasion of a gracious exercise, and consequently a gracious influence of the Spirit of God, by Rom. xiv. 6. "He that eateth to the Lord he eateth, and giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks!" The apostle is speaking of those, who through erroneous and needless scruples, avoided eating legally unclean meats.....By this it is very evident, that there may be true exercises of grace, a true respect to the Lord, and particularly, a true thankfulness, which may be occasioned, both by an erroneous judgment and practice. And consequently, an error may be the occasion of those true holy exercises that are from the infallible Spirit of God. And if so, it is certainly too much for us to determine, to how great a degree the Spirit of God may give this holy exercise, on such an occasion.

This notion, of certainly discerning another's state, by love flowing out, is not only not founded on reason or scripture, but it is antiscriptural, it is against the rules of scripture; which say not a word of any such way of judging the state of others as this, but direct us to judge chiefly by the fruits that are seen in them. And it is against the doctrines of scripture,

which do plainly teach us, that the state of others' souls towards God cannot be known by us, as in Rev. ii. 17. "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it." And Rom. ii. 29. "He is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God." That by this last expression, "whose praise is not of men, but of God," the apostle has respect to the insufficiency of men to judge concerning him, whether he be inwardly a Jew or no (as they could easily see by outward marks, whether men were outwardly Jews) and would signify, that it belongs to God alone to give a determining voice in this matter, is confirmed by the same apostle's use of the phrase, in 1 Cor. iv. 5. "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart:" And then shall every man have praise of God. The apostle, in the two foregoing verses, says, "But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: Yea, I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing by myself, yet am I not hereby justified; but he that judgeth me is the Lord." And again, it is further confirmed, because the apostle, in this second chapter to the Romans, directs his speech especially to those who had a high conceit of their own holiness, made their boast of God, and were confident of their own discerning, and that they knew God's will, and approved the things which were excellent, or tried the things that differ (as it is in the margin) ver. 19, "And were confident that they were guides of the blind, and a light to them which are in darkness, instructors of the foolish, teachers of babes; and so took upon them to judge others." See ver. 1, and 17, 18, 19, 20.

And how arrogant must the notion be, that they have, who imagine they can certainly know others' godliness, when that great Apostle Peter pretends not to say any more concerning Sylvanus, than that he was a faithful brother, as he supposed?

1 Pet. v. 12. Though this Sylvanus appears to have been a very eminent minister of Christ, and an evangelist, and a famous light in God's Church at that day, and an intimate companion of the apostles. See 2 Cor. i. 19. 1 Thess. i. 1, and 2 Thess. i. 1.

PART III.

Shewing what are Distinguishing Signs of Truly Gracious and Holy Affections.

I COME now to the second thing appertaining to the trial of religious affections, which was proposed, viz. To take notice of some things, wherein those affections that are spiritual and gracious, do differ from those that are not so.

But before I proceed directly to the distinguishing characters, I would previously mention some things which I desire may be observed, concerning the marks I shall lay down.

1. That I am far from undertaking to give such signs of gracious affections, as shall be sufficient to enable any certainly to distinguish true affection from false in others ; or to determine positively which of their neighbors are true professors, and which are hypocrites. In so doing, I should be guilty of that arrogance which I have been condemning. Though it be plain that Christ has given rules to all Christians, to enable them to judge of professors of religion, whom they are concerned with, so far as is necessary for their own safety, and to prevent their being led into a snare by false teachers, and false pretenders to religion ; and though it be also beyond doubt, that the scriptures do abound with rules, which may be very serviceable to ministers, in counselling and conducting souls committed to their care, in things appertaining to their spiritual and eternal state ; yet it is also evident, that it was never God's design to give us any rules, by which we may certainly know, who of our fellow profes-

sors are his, and to make a full and clear separation between sheep and goats; but that, on the contrary, it was God's design to reserve this to himself, as his prerogative. And therefore no such distinguishing signs as shall enable Christians or ministers to do this, are ever to be expected to the world's end: For no more is ever to be expected from any signs, that are to be found in the word of God, or gathered from it, than Christ designed them for.

2. No such signs are to be expected, that shall be sufficient to enable those saints certainly to discern their own good estate, who are very low in grace, or are such as have much departed from God, and are fallen into a dead, carnal, and unchristian frame. It is not agreeable to God's design, (as has been already observed) that such should know their good estate: Nor is it desirable that they should; but, on the contrary every way best that they should not; and we have reason to bless God, that he has made no provision that such should certainly know the state that they are in, any other way than by first coming out of the ill frame and way they are in. Indeed it is not properly through the defect of the signs given in the word of God, that every saint living, whether strong or weak, and those who are in a bad frame, as well as others, cannot certainly know their good estate by them. For the rules in themselves are certain and infallible, and every saint has, or has had those things in himself, which are sure evidences of grace; for every, even the least act of grace is so. But it is through his defect to whom the signs are given. There is a twofold defect in that saint who is very low in grace, or in an ill frame, which makes it impossible for him to know certainly that he has true grace, by the best signs and rules which can be given him. First, a defect in the object, or the qualification to be viewed and examined. I do not mean an essential defect; because I suppose the person to be a real saint; but a defect in degree: Grace being very small, cannot be clearly and certainly discerned and distinguished.

Things that are very small, we cannot clearly discern their form, or distinguish them one from another; though, as they are in themselves, their form may be very different. There

is doubtless a great difference between the body of man, and the bodies of other animals, in the first conception in the womb: But yet if we should view the different embryos, it might not be possible for us to discern the difference, by reason of the imperfect state of the object; but as it comes to greater perfection, the difference becomes very plain. The difference between creatures of very contrary qualities, is not so plainly to be seen while they are very young; even after they are actually brought forth, as in their more perfect state. The difference between doves and ravens, or doves and vultures, when they first come out of the egg, is not so evident; but as they grow to their perfection, it is exceeding great and manifest. Another defect attending the grace of those I am speaking of is its being mingled with so much corruption, which clouds and hides it, and makes it impossible for it certainly to be known. Though different things that are before us, may have in themselves many marks thoroughly distinguishing them one from another; yet if we see them only in a thick smoke, it may nevertheless be impossible to distinguish them. A fixed star is easily distinguishable from a comet, in a clear sky; but if we view them through a cloud, it may be impossible to see the difference. When true Christians are in an ill frame, guilt lies on the conscience; which will bring fear, and so prevent the peace and joy of an assured hope.

Secondly. There is in such a case a defect in the eye. As the feebleness of grace and prevalence of corruption, obscures the object; so it enfeebles the sight; it darkens the sight as to all spiritual objects, of which grace is one. Sin is like some distempers of the eyes, that make things to appear of different colors from those which properly belong to them, and like many other distempers, that put the mouth out of taste so as to disenable it from distinguishing good and wholesome food from bad, but every thing tastes bitter.

Men in a corrupt and carnal frame, have their spiritual senses in but poor plight for judging and distinguishing spiritual things.

For these reasons no signs that can be given, will actually satisfy persons in such a case: Let the signs that are given

be never so good and infallible, and clearly laid down, they will not serve them. It is like giving a man rules, how to distinguish visible objects in the dark; the things themselves may be very different, and their difference may be very well and distinctly described to him; yet all is insufficient to enable him to distinguish them, because he is in the dark. And therefore many persons in such a case spend time in a fruitless labor, in poring on past experiences, and examining themselves by signs they hear laid down from the pulpit, or that they read in books; when there is other work for them to do, that is much more expected of them; which, while they neglect, all their self examinations are like to be in vain if they should spend never so much time in them. The accursed thing is to be destroyed from their camp, and Achan to be slain; and until this be done they will be in trouble. It is not God's design that men should obtain assurance in any other way, than by mortifying corruption, and increasing in grace, and obtaining the lively exercises of it..... And although self examination be a duty of great use and importance, and by no means to be neglected; yet it is not the principal means, by which the saints do get satisfaction of their good estate. Assurance is not to be obtained so much by *self examination*, as by *action*. The Apostle Paul sought assurance chiefly this way, even by "forgetting the things that were behind, and reaching forth unto those things that were before, pressing towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus; if by any means he might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." And it was by this means chiefly that he obtained assurance, 1 Cor. ix. 26. "I therefore so run, not as uncertainly." He obtained assurance of winning the prize, more by running, than by considering. The swiftness of his pace did more towards his assurance of a conquest, than the strictness of his examination. Giving all diligence to grow in grace, by adding to faith, virtue, &c. is the direction that the apostle Peter gives us, for "making our calling and election sure, and having an entrance ministered to us abundantly, into Christ's everlast-

ing kingdom;" signifying to us, that without this, our eyes will be dim, and we shall be as men in the dark, that cannot plainly see things past or to come, either the forgiveness of our sins past, or our heavenly inheritance that is future, and far off, 2 Pet. i. 5....11.*

Therefore, though good rules to distinguish true grace from counterfeit, may tend to convince hypocrites, and be of great use to the saints, in many respects; and among other benefits may be very useful to them to remove many needless scruples, and establish their hope; yet I am far from pretending to lay down any such rules, as shall be sufficient of themselves, without other means, to enable all true saints to see their good estate, or as supposing they should be the principal means of their satisfaction.

3. Nor is there much encouragement, in the experience of present or past times, to lay down rules or marks to distinguish between true and false affections, in hopes of convincing any considerable number of that sort of hypocrites, who have been deceived with great false discoveries and affections, and are once settled in a false confidence, and high conceit of their own supposed great experiences and privileges. Such hypocrites are so conceited of their own wisdom, and so blinded and hardened with a very great selfrighteousness (but very subtle and secret, under the disguise of great humility) and so invincible a fondness of their pleasing conceit, of their great exaltation, that it usually signifies nothing at all to lay before them the most convincing evidences of their hypocrisy. Their state is indeed deplorable, and next to those that have committed the unpardonable sin. Some of this sort of persons seem to be most out of the reach of means of conviction

* The way to know your godliness, is to renew the visible exercises of grace,....The more the visible exercises of grace are renewed, the more certain you will be. The more frequently these actings are renewed, the more abiding and confirmed your assurance will be.

The more men's grace is multiplied, the more their peace is multiplied; 2 Pet. i. 2. "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you, through the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ our Lord." *Stoddard's Way to know sincerity and hypocrisy*, p. 139 and 142.

and repentance. But yet the laying down good rules may be a means of preventing such hypocrites, and of convincing many of other kinds of hypocrites; and God is able to convince even this kind, and his grace is not to be limited, nor means to be neglected. And besides such rules may be of use to the true saints, to detect false affections, which they may have mingled with true; and be a means of their religion's becoming more pure, and like gold tried in the fire.

Having premised these things, I now proceed directly to take notice of those things in which true religious affections are distinguished from false.

I. Affections that are truly spiritual and gracious, do arise from those influences and operations on the heart, which are spiritual, supernatural, and divine.

I will explain what I mean by these terms, whence will appear their use to distinguish between those affections which are spiritual, and those which are not so.

We find that true saints, or those persons who are sanctified by the Spirit of God, are in the New Testament called spiritual persons. And their being spiritual is spoken of as their peculiar character, and that wherein they are distinguished from those who are not sanctified. This is evident, because those who are spiritual are set in opposition to natural men, and carnal men. Thus the spiritual man and the natural man are set in opposition one to another, 1 Cor. ii. 14, 15. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things." The scripture explains itself to mean an ungodly man, or one that has no grace, by a natural man: Thus the Apostle Jude, speaking of certain ungodly men, that had crept in unawares among the saints, ver. 4, of his epistle, says v. 19. "These are sensual, having not the Spirit." This the apostle gives us a reason why they behaved themselves in such a wicked manner as he had described. Here the word translated *sensual*, in the original is *Psychikoi*; which is the very same, which in those verses in 1 Cor. chap. ii. is translated *natural*.

In the like manner, in the continuation of the same discourse, in the next verse but one, spiritual men are opposed to carnal men; which the connexion plainly shews mean the same, as spiritual men and natural men, in the foregoing verses; "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you, as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal;" i. e. as in a great measure unsanctified. That by carnal the apostle means corrupt and unsanctified, is abundantly evident, by Rom. vii. 25, and viii. 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13. Gal. v. 16, to the end. Col. ii. 18. Now therefore, if by natural and carnal, in these texts, he intended unsanctified, then doubtless by spiritual, which is opposed thereto, is meant sanctified and gracious.

And as the saints are called spiritual in scripture, so we also find that there are certain properties, qualities, and principles, that have the same epithet given them. So we read of a "spiritual mind," Rom. viii. 6, 7, and of "spiritual wisdom," Col. i. 9, and of "spiritual blessings," Eph. i. 3.

Now it may be observed, that the epithet *spiritual*, in these and other parallel texts of the New Testament, is not used to signify any relation of persons or things to the spirit or soul of man, as the spiritual part of man, in opposition to the body, which is the material part. Qualities are not said to be spiritual, because they have their seat in the soul, and not in the body: For there are some properties that the scripture calls *carnal* or *fleshly*, which have their seat as much in the soul, as those properties that are called *spiritual*. Thus it is with pride and self righteousness, and a man's trusting to his own wisdom, which the apostle calls *fleshly*, Col. ii. 18. Nor are things called spiritual, because they are conversant about those things that are immaterial, and not corporeal. For so was the wisdom of the wise men, and princes of this world, conversant about spirits, and immaterial beings; which yet the apostle speaks of as natural men, totally ignorant of those things that are spiritual, 1 Cor. chap. ii. But it is with relation to the Holy Ghost, or Spirit of God, that persons or things are termed spiritual in the New Testament. Spirit, as the word is used to signify the third person in the Trinity, is the substantive, of which is formed the adjective spiritual, in

the holy scriptures. Thus Christians are called spiritual persons, because they are born of the Spirit, and because of the indwelling and holy influences of the Spirit of God in them. And things are called spiritual as related to the Spirit of God, 1 Cor. ii. 13, 14. "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God." Here the apostle himself expressly signifies, that by spiritual things, he means the things of the Spirit of God, and things which the Holy Ghost teacheth. The same is yet more abundantly apparent by viewing the whole context. Again, Rom. viii. 6. To be carnally minded, is death; to be spiritually minded, is life and peace. The apostle explains what he means by being carnally and spiritually minded in what follows in the 9th verse, and shews that by being spiritually minded, he means a having the indwelling and holy influences of the Spirit of God in the heart. "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." The same is evident by all the context. But time would fail to produce all the evidence there is of this, in the New Testament.

And it must be here observed, that although it is with relation to the Spirit of God and his influences, that persons and things are called spiritual; yet not all those persons who are subject to any kind of influence of the Spirit of God, are ordinarily called spiritual in the New Testament. They who have only the common influences of God's Spirit, are not so called, in the places cited above, but only those who have the special, gracious, and saving influences of God's Spirit; as is evident, because it has been already proved, that by spiritual men is meant godly men, in opposition to natural, carnal, and unsanctified men. And it is most plain, that the apostle by spiritually minded, Rom. viii. 6, means graciously minded. And though the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, which natural men might have, are sometimes called spiritual, because they are from the Spirit; yet natural men, whatever gifts of

the Spirit they had, were not in the usual language of the New Testament, called spiritual persons. For it was not by men's having the gifts of the Spirit, but by their having the virtues of the Spirit, that they were called spiritual; as is apparent by Gal. vi. 1. "Brethren, if any man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness." Meekness is one of those virtues which the apostle had just spoken of, in the verses next preceding, shewing what are the fruits of the Spirit. Those qualifications are said to be spiritual in the language of the New Testament, which are truly gracious and holy, and peculiar to the saints.

Thus when we read of spiritual wisdom and understanding, (as in Col. i. 9, "We desire that ye may be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding") hereby is intended that wisdom which is gracious, and from the sanctifying influences of the Spirit of God. For doubtless, by spiritual wisdom is meant that which is opposite to what the scripture calls natural wisdom; as the spiritual man is opposed to the natural man. And therefore spiritual wisdom is doubtless the same with that wisdom which is from above, that the Apostle James speaks of, Jam. iii. 17. "The wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, &c. for this the apostle opposes to natural wisdom, ver. 15. "This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual"....the last word in the original is the same that is translated *natural*, in 1 Cor. ii. 14.

So that although natural men may be the subjects of many influences of the Spirit of God, as is evident by many scriptures, as Numb. xxiv. 2, 1 Sam. x. 10, and xi. 6, and xvi. 14, 1 Cor. xiii. 1, 2, 3. Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6, and many others; yet they are not, in the sense of the scripture, spiritual persons; neither are any of those effects, common gifts, qualities, or affections, that are from the influence of the Spirit of God upon them, called spiritual things. The great difference lies in these two things.

1. The Spirit of God is given to the true saints to dwell in them, as his proper lasting abode; and to influence their

hearts, as a principle of new nature, or as a divine supernatural spring of life and action. The scriptures represent the Holy Spirit not only as moving, and occasionally influencing the saints, but as dwelling in them as his temple, his proper abode, and everlasting dwelling place, 1 Cor. iii. 16. 2 Cor. vi. 16. John xiv. 16, 17. And he is represented as being there so united to the faculties of the soul, that he becomes there a principle or spring of new nature and life.

So the saints are said to live by Christ living in them, Gal. ii. 20. Christ by his Spirit not only *is* in them, but *lives* in them; and so that they live by his life; so is his spirit united to them, as a principle of life in them; they do not only drink living water, but this "living water becomes a well or fountain of water," in the soul, "springing up into spiritual and everlasting life," John iv. 14, and thus becomes a principle of life in them: This living water, this evangelist himself explains to intend the Spirit of God, Chap. vii. 38, 39. The light of the Sun of righteousness does not only shine upon them, but is so communicated to them that they shine also, and become little images of that Sun which shines upon them; the sap of the true vine is not only conveyed into them, as the sap of a tree may be conveyed into a vessel, but is conveyed as sap is from a tree into one of its living branches, where it becomes a principle of life. The spirit of God being thus communicated and united to the saints, they are from thence properly denominated from it, and are called *spiritual*.

On the other hand, though the Spirit of God may many ways influence natural men; yet because it is not thus communicated to them, as an indwelling principle, they do not derive any denomination or character from it; for, there being no union, it is not their own. The light may shine upon a body that is very dark or black; and though that body be the subject of the light, yet, because the light becomes no principle of light in it, so as to cause the body to shine, hence that body does not properly receive its denomination from it, so as to be called a lightsome body. So the Spirit of God acting upon the soul only, without communicating itself to be

an active principle in it, cannot denominate it spiritual. A body that continues black, may be said not to have light, though the light shines upon it: So natural men are said "not to have the Spirit," Jude 19, sensual or natural (as the word is elsewhere rendered) having not the Spirit.

2. Another reason why the saints and their virtues are called spiritual (which is the principal thing) is, that the Spirit of God, dwelling as a vital principle in their souls, there produces those effects wherein he exerts and communicates himself in his own proper nature. Holiness is the nature of the Spirit of God, therefore he is called in scripture the Holy Ghost. Holiness, which is as it were the beauty and sweetness of the divine nature, is as much the proper nature of the Holy Spirit, as heat is the nature of fire, or sweetness was the nature of that holy anointing oil, which was the principal type of the Holy Ghost in the Mosaic dispensation; yea, I may rather say, that holiness is as much the proper nature of the Holy Ghost, as sweetness was the nature of the sweet odour of that ointment. The Spirit of God so dwells in the hearts of the saints, that he there, as a seed or spring of life, exerts and communicates himself, in this his sweet and divine nature, making the soul a partaker of God's beauty and Christ's joy, so that the saint has truly fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, in thus having the communion or participation of the Holy Ghost. The grace which is in the hearts of the saints, is of the same nature with the divine holiness, as much as it is possible for that holiness to be, which is infinitely less in degree; as the brightness that is in a diamond which the sun shines upon, is of the same nature with the brightness of the sun, but only that it is as nothing to it in degree. Therefore Christ says, John iii. 6. "That which is born of the Spirit, is spirit;" i. e. the grace that is begotten in the hearts of the saints, is something of the same nature with that Spirit, and so is properly called a spiritual nature; after the same manner as that which is born of the flesh is flesh, or that which is born of corrupt nature is corrupt nature.

But the Spirit of God never influences the minds of natural men after this manner. Though he may influence them many ways, yet he never, in any of his influences, communicates himself to them in his own proper nature. Indeed he never acts disagreeably to his nature, either on the minds of saints or sinners: But the Spirit of God may act upon men agreeably to his own nature, and not exert his proper nature in the acts and exercises of their minds: The Spirit of God may act so, that his actions may be agreeable to his nature, and yet may not at all communicate himself in his proper nature, in the effect of that action. Thus, for instance, the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, and there was nothing disagreeable to his nature in that action; but yet he did not at all communicate himself in that action, there was nothing of the proper nature of the Holy Spirit in that motion of the waters. And so he may act upon the minds of men many ways, and not communicate himself any more than when he acts on inanimate things.

Thus not only the manner of the relation of the Spirit, who is the operator, to the subject of his operations, is different; as the Spirit operates in the saints, as dwelling in them, as an abiding principle of action, whereas he doth not so operate upon sinners; but the influence and operation itself is different, and the effect wrought exceeding different. So that not only the persons are called *spiritual*, as having the Spirit of God dwelling in them; but those qualifications, affections, and experiences, that are wrought in them by the Spirit, are also *spiritual*, and therein differ vastly in their nature and kind from all that a natural man is or can be the subject of, while he remains in a natural state; and also from all that men or devils can be the authors of. It is a spiritual work in this high sense; and therefore above all other works is peculiar to the Spirit of God. There is no work so high and excellent; for there is no work wherein God doth so much communicate himself, and wherein the mere creature hath, in so high a sense, a participation of God; so that it is expressed in scripture by the saints, "being made partakers of the divine nature," 2 Pet. i. 4, and "having God dwelling in them,

and they in God," 1 John iv. 12, 15, 16, and chap. iii. 21, "and having Christ in them," John xvii. 21, Rom. viii. 10, "being the temples of the living God," 2 Cor. vi. 16, "living by Christ's life," Gal. ii. 20, "being made partakers of God's holiness," Heb. xii. 10, "having Christ's love dwelling in them," John xvii. 26, "having his joy fulfilled in them," John xvii. 13, "seeing light in God's light, and being made to drink of the river of God's pleasures," Psal. xxxvi. 8, 9, "having fellowship with God, or communicating and partaking with him (as the word signifies) 1 John i. 3. Not that the saints are made partakers of the essence of God, and so are *godded* with God, and *christed* with Christ, according to the abominable and blasphemous language and notions of some heretics: But, to use the scripture phrase, they are made partakers of God's fulness, Eph. iii. 17, 18, 19, John i. 16, that is, of God's spiritual beauty and happiness, according to the measure and capacity of a creature; for so it is evident the word *fulness* signifies in scripture language. Grace in the hearts of the saints, being therefore the most glorious work of God, wherein he communicates of the goodness of his nature, it is doubtless his peculiar work, and in an eminent manner, above the power of all creatures. And the influences of the Spirit of God in this, being thus peculiar to God, and being those wherein God does, in so high a manner, communicate himself, and make the creature partaker of the divine nature (the Spirit of God communicating itself in its own proper nature) this is what I mean by those influences that are divine, when I say that "truly gracious affections do arise from those influences that are spiritual and divine."

The true saints only have that which is spiritual; others have nothing which is divine, in the sense that has been spoken of. They not only have not these communications of the Spirit of God in so high a degree as the saints, but have nothing of that nature or kind. For the Apostle James tells us, that natural men have not the Spirit; and Christ teaches the necessity of a new birth, or of being born of the Spirit, from this, that he that is born of the flesh, has only flesh, and no

spirit, John iii. 6. They have not the Spirit of God dwelling in them in any degree; for the apostle teaches, that all who have the Spirit of God dwelling in them, are some of his, Rom. viii. 9....11. And an having the Spirit of God is spoken of as a certain sign that persons shall have the eternal inheritance; for it is spoken of as the earnest of it, 2 Cor. i. 22, and v. 5, Eph. i. 14, and an having any thing of the Spirit is mentioned as a sure sign of being in Christ, 1 John iv. 13. "Hereby know we that we dwell in him, because he hath given us of his Spirit." Ungodly men not only have not so much of the divine nature as the saints, but they are not partakers of it; which implies that they have nothing of it; for a being partaker of the divine nature is spoken of as the peculiar privilege of the true saints, 2 Pet. i. 4. Ungodly men are not "partakers of God's holiness," Heb. xii. 10. A natural man has no experience of any of those things that are spiritual: The apostle teaches us, that he is so far from it, that he knows nothing about them, he is a perfect stranger to them, the talk about such things is all foolishness and nonsense to him, he knows not what it means, 1 Cor. ii. 14. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him: Neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." And to the like purpose Christ teaches us that the world is wholly unacquainted with the Spirit of God, John xiv. 17. "Even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him." And it is further evident, that natural men have nothing in them of the same nature with the true grace of the saints, because the apostle teaches us, that those of them who go farthest in religion have no charity, or true Christian love, 1 Cor. chap. xiii. So Christ elsewhere reproves the Pharisees, those high pretenders to religion, that they "had not the love of God in them," John v. 42. Hence natural men have no communion or fellowship with Christ, or participation with him (as these words signify) for this is spoken of as the peculiar privilege of the saints, 1 John i. 3, together with ver. 6, 7, and 1 Cor. i. 8, 9. And the scripture speaks of the actual being of a gracious principle in the soul,

though in its first beginning, as a seed there planted, as inconsistent with a man's being a sinner, 1 John iii. 9. And natural men are represented in scripture, as having no spiritual light, no spiritual life, and no spiritual being; and therefore conversion is often compared to opening the eyes of the blind, raising the dead, and a work of creation (wherein creatures are made entirely new) and becoming new born children.

From these things it is evident, that those gracious influences which the saints are subjects of, and the effects of God's Spirit which they experience, are entirely above nature, altogether of a different kind from any thing that men find within themselves by nature, or only in the exercise of natural principles; and are things which no improvement of those qualifications, or principles that are natural, no advancing or exalting them to higher degrees, and no kind of composition of them, will ever bring men to; because they not only differ from what is natural, and from every thing that natural men experience, in degree and circumstances, but also in kind; and are of a nature vastly more excellent. And this is what I mean, by supernatural, when I say that gracious affections are from those influences that are supernatural.

From hence it follows, that in those gracious exercises and affections which are wrought in the minds of the saints, through the saving influences of the Spirit of God, there is a new inward perception or sensation of their minds, entirely different in its nature and kind, from any thing that ever their minds were the subjects of before they were sanctified. For doubtless if God by his mighty power produces something that is new, not only in degree and circumstances, but in its whole nature, and that which could be produced by no exalting, varying, or compounding of what was there before, or by adding any thing of the like kind; I say, if God produces something thus new in a mind, that is a perceiving, thinking, conscious thing; then doubtless something entirely new is felt, or perceived, or thought; or, which is the same thing, there is some new sensation or perception of the mind, which is entirely of a new sort, and which could be produced by no

exalting, varying, or compounding of that kind of perceptions or sensations which the mind had before; or there is what some metaphysicians call a new simple idea. If grace be, in the sense above described, an entirely new kind of principle, then the exercises of it are also entirely a new kind of exercises. And if there be in the soul a new sort of exercises which it is conscious of, which the soul knew nothing of before, and which no improvement, composition, or management of what it was before conscious or sensible of, could produce, or any thing like it; then it follows that the mind has an entirely new kind of perception or sensation; and here is, as it were, a new spiritual sense that the mind has, or a principle of a new kind of perception or spiritual sensation, which is in its whole nature different from any former kinds of sensation of the mind, as tasting is diverse from any of the other senses; and something is perceived by a true saint, in the exercise of this new sense of mind, in spiritual and divine things, as entirely diverse from any thing that is perceived in them, by natural men, as the sweet taste of honey is diverse from the ideas men have of honey by only looking on it, and feeling of it. So that the spiritual perceptions which a sanctified and spiritual person has, are not only diverse from all that natural men have after the manner that the ideas or perceptions of the same sense may differ one from another, but rather as the ideas and sensations of different senses do differ. Hence the work of the Spirit of God in regeneration is often in scripture compared to the giving a new sense, giving eyes to see, and ears to hear, unstopping the ears of the deaf, and opening the eyes of them that were born blind, and turning from darkness unto light. And because this spiritual sense is immensely the most noble and excellent, and that without which all other principles of perception, and all our faculties are useless and vain; therefore the giving this new sense with the blessed fruits and effects of it in the soul, is compared to a raising the dead, and to a new creation.

This new spiritual sense, and the new dispositions that attend it, are no new faculties, but are new principles of nature. I use the word principles for want of a word of a more

determinate signification. By a principle of nature in this place, I mean that foundation which is laid in nature, either old or new, for any particular manner or kind of exercise of the faculties of the soul; or a natural habit or foundation for action, giving a person ability and disposition to exert the faculties in exercises of such a certain kind; so that to exert the faculties in that kind of exercises may be said to be his nature. So this new spiritual sense is not a new faculty of understanding, but it is a new foundation laid in the nature of the soul, for a new kind of exercises of the same faculty of understanding. So that new holy disposition of heart that attends this new sense is not a new faculty of will, but a foundation laid in the nature of the soul, for a new kind of exercises of the same faculty of will.

The Spirit of God, in all his operations upon the minds of natural men, only moves, impresses, assists, improves, or some way acts upon natural principles; but gives no new spiritual principle. Thus when the Spirit of God gives a natural man visions, as he did Balaam, he only impresses a natural principle, viz. the sense of seeing, immediately exciting ideas of that sense; but he gives no new sense; neither is there any thing supernatural, spiritual, or divine in it. So if the Spirit of God impresses on a man's imagination, either in a dream, or when he is awake, any outward ideas of any of the senses, either voices, or shapes and colors, it is only exciting ideas of the same kind that he has by natural principles and senses. So if God reveals to any natural man any secret fact; as, for instance, something that he shall hereafter see or hear; this is not infusing or exercising any new spiritual principle, or giving the ideas of any new spiritual sense; it is only impressing in an extraordinary manner, the ideas that will hereafter be received by sight and hearing..... So in the more ordinary influences of the Spirit of God on the hearts of sinners, he only assists natural principles to do the same work to a greater degree, which they do of themselves by nature. Thus the Spirit of God by his common influences may assist men's natural ingeniosity, as he assisted Bezaleel and Aholiab in the curious works of the tabernacle: So

he may assist men's natural abilities in political affairs, and improve their courage and other natural qualifications, as he is said to have put his spirit on the seventy elders and on Saul, so as to give him another heart: So God may greatly assist natural men's reason, in their reasoning about secular things, or about the doctrines of religion, and may greatly advance the clearness of their apprehensions and notions of things of religion in many respects, without giving any spiritual sense. So in those awakenings and convictions that natural men may have, God only assists conscience, which is a natural principle to do that work in a further degree, which it naturally does. Conscience naturally gives men an apprehension of right and wrong, and suggests the relation there is between right and wrong, and a retribution: The Spirit of God assists men's consciences to do this in a greater degree, helps conscience against the stupifying influence of worldly objects and their lusts. And so many other ways might be mentioned wherein the Spirit acts upon, assists, and moves natural principles; but after all, it is no more than nature moved, acted and improved; here is nothing supernatural and divine. But the Spirit of God in his spiritual influences on the hearts of his saints, operates by infusing or exercising new, divine, and supernatural principles; principles which are indeed a new and spiritual nature, and principles vastly more noble and excellent than all that is in natural men.

From what has been said it follows, that all spiritual and gracious affections are attended with, and do arise from some apprehension, idea, or sensation of mind, which is in its whole nature different, yea, exceeding different, from all that is, or can be in the mind of a natural man; and which the natural man discerns nothing of, and has no manner of idea of (agreeable to 1 Cor. ii. 14.) and conceives of no more than a man without the sense of tasting can conceive of the sweet taste of honey, or a man without the sense of hearing can conceive of the melody of a tune, or a man born blind can have a notion of the beauty of the rainbow.

But here two things must be observed, in order to the right understanding of this.

1. On the one hand it must be observed, that not every thing which in any respect appertains to spiritual affections, is new and entirely different from what natural men can conceive of, and do experience; some things are common to gracious affections with other affections; many circumstances, appendages and effects are common. Thus a saint's love to God has a great many things appertaining to it, which are common with a man's natural love to a near relation; love to God makes a man have desires of the honor of God, and a desire to please him; so does a natural man's love to his friend make him desire his honor, and desire to please him; love to God causes a man to delight in the thoughts of God, and to delight in the presence of God, and to desire conformity to God, and the enjoyment of God; and so it is with a man's love to his friend; and many other things might be mentioned which are common to both. But yet that idea which the saint has of the loveliness of God, and that sensation, and that kind of delight he has in that view, which is as it were the marrow and quintescence of his love, is peculiar, and entirely diverse from any thing that a natural man has, or can have any notion of. And even in those things that seem to be common, there is some thing peculiar; both spiritual and natural, cause desires after the object beloved; but they be not the same sort of desires: There is a sensation of soul in the spiritual desires of one that loves God, which is entirely different from all natural desires: Both spiritual love and natural love are attended with delight in the object beloved; but the sensations of delight are not the same, but entirely and exceedingly diverse. Natural men may have conceptions of many things about spiritual affections; but there is something in them which is as it were the nucleus, or kernel of them, that they have no more conception of, than one born blind, has of colors.

It may be clearly illustrated by this: We will suppose two men; one is born without the sense of tasting, the other has it; the latter loves honey, and is greatly delighted in it, because he knows the sweet taste of it; the other loves certain sounds and colors; the love of each has many things that appertain to it, which is common; it causes both to desire

and delight in the object beloved, and causes grief when it is absent, &c. but yet that idea or sensation which he who knows the taste of honey has of its excellency and sweetness, that is the foundation of his love, is entirely different from any thing the other has or can have; and that delight which he has in honey, is wholly diverse from any thing that the other can conceive of, though they both delight in their beloved objects. So both these persons may in some respects love the same object: The one may love a delicious kind of fruit, which is beautiful to the eye, and of a delicious taste; not only because he has seen its pleasant colors, but knows its sweet taste; the other, perfectly ignorant of this, loves it only for its beautiful colors; there are many things seen, in some respect, to be common to both; both love, both desire, and both delight; but the love and desire, and delight of the one, is altogether diverse from that of the other. The difference between the love of a natural man and a spiritual man is like to this; but only it must be observed, that in one respect it is vastly greater, viz. that the kinds of excellency which are perceived in spiritual objects, by these different kinds of persons, are in themselves vastly more diverse than the different kinds of excellency perceived in delicious fruit, by a tasting and a tasteless man; and in another respect it may not be so great, viz. as the spiritual man may have a spiritual sense or taste, to perceive that divine and most peculiar excellency but in small beginnings, and in a very imperfect degree.

2. On the other hand, it must be observed, that a natural man may have those religious apprehensions and affections, which may be in many respects very new and surprising to him, and what before he did not conceive of; and yet if what he experiences be nothing like the exercises of a principle of new nature, or the sensations of a new spiritual sense; his affections may be very new, by extraordinarily moving natural principles in a very new degree, and with a great many new circumstances, and a new cooperation of natural affections, and a new composition of ideas; this may be from some extraordinary powerful influence of Satan, and some great delusion; but there is nothing but nature extraordinarily

acted. As if a poor man that had always dwelt in a cottage, and had never looked beyond the obscure village where he was born, should in a jest be taken to a magnificent city and prince's court, and there arrayed in princely robes, and set on the throne, with the crown royal on his head, peers and nobles bowing before him, and should be made to believe that he was now a glorious monarch; the ideas he would have, and the affections he would experience, would, in many respects be very new, and such as he had no imagination of before; but all this is no more than extraordinarily raising and exciting natural principles, and newly exalting, varying, and compounding such sort of ideas, as he has by nature; here is nothing like giving him a new sense.

Upon the whole, I think it is clearly manifest, that all truly gracious affections do arise from special and peculiar influences of the Spirit, working that sensible effect or sensation in the souls of the saints, which are entirely different from all that is possible a natural man should experience, not only different in degree and circumstances, but different in its whole nature; so that a natural man not only cannot experience that which is individually the same, but cannot experience any thing but what is exceeding diverse, and immensely below it, in its kind; and that which the power of men or devils is not sufficient to produce the like of, or any thing of the same nature.

I have insisted largely on this matter, because it is of great importance and use, evidently to discover and demonstrate the delusions of Satan, in many kinds of false religious affections, which multitudes are deluded by, and probably have been in all ages of the Christian church; and to settle and determine many articles of doctrine, concerning the operations of the Spirit of God, and the nature of true grace.

Now, therefore, to apply these things to the purpose of this discourse.

From hence it appears, that impressions which some have made on their imagination, or the imaginary ideas which they have of God, or Christ, or heaven, or any thing appertaining to religion, have nothing in them that is spiritual, or of the

nature of true grace. Though such things may attend what is spiritual, and be mixed with it, yet in themselves they have nothing that is spiritual, nor are they any part of gracious experience.

Here for the sake of common people, I will explain what is intended by impressions on the imagination and imaginary ideas. The imagination is that power of the mind whereby it can have a conception, or idea of things of an external or outward nature (that is, of such sort of things as are the objects of the outward senses) when those things are not present, and be not perceived by the senses. It is called imagination from the word *image*; because thereby a person can have an image of some external thing in his mind, when that thing is not present in reality, nor any thing like it. All such things as we perceive by our five external senses, seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and feeling, are external things: And when a person has an idea or image of any of these sorts of things in his mind, when they are not there, and when he does not really see, hear, smell, taste, nor feel them; that is to have an imagination of them, and these ideas are imaginary ideas: And when such kinds of ideas are strongly impressed upon the mind, and the image of them in the mind is very lively, almost as if one saw them, or heard them, &c. that is called an impression on the imagination. Thus colors and shapes, and a form of countenance, they are outward things; because they are that sort of things which are the objects of the outward sense of seeing; and therefore when any person has in his mind a lively idea of any shape, or color, or form of countenance; that is to have an imagination of those things. So if he has an idea, of such sort of light or darkness, as he perceives by the sense of seeing; that is to have an idea of outward light, and so is an imagination. So if he has an idea of any marks made on paper, suppose letters and words written in a book; that is to have an external and imaginary idea of such kind of things as we sometimes perceive by our bodily eyes. And when we have the ideas of that kind of things which we perceive by any of the other senses, as of any sounds or voices, or words spoken; this is only to have ideas of out-

ward things, viz. of such kind of things as are perceived by the external sense of hearing, and so that also is imagination: And when these ideas are livelily impressed, almost as if they were really heard with the ears, this is to have an impression on the imagination. And so I might go on, and instance in the ideas of things appertaining to the other three senses of smelling, tasting, and feeling.

Many who have had such things have very ignorantly supposed them to be of the nature of spiritual discoveries. They have had lively ideas of some external shape, and beautiful form of countenance; and this they call spiritually seeing Christ. Some have had impressed upon them ideas of a great outward light; and this they call a spiritual discovery of God's or Christ's glory. Some have had ideas of Christ's hanging on the cross, and his blood running from his wounds; and this they call a spiritual sight of Christ crucified, and the way of salvation by his blood. Some have seen him with his arms open ready to embrace them; and this they call a discovery of the sufficiency of Christ's grace and love. Some have had lively ideas of heaven, and of Christ on his throne there, and shining ranks of saints and angels; and this they call seeing heaven opened to them. Some from time to time have had a livelyid ea of a person of a beautiful countenance smiling upon them; and this they call a spiritual discovery of the love of Christ to their souls, and tasting the love of Christ. And they look upon it a sufficient evidence that these things are spiritual discoveries, and that they see them spiritually, because they say they do not see these things with their bodily eyes, but in their hearts; for they can see them when their eyes are shut. And in like manner, the imaginations of some have been impressed with ideas of the sense of hearing; they have had ideas of words, as if they were spoken to them, sometimes they are the words of scripture, and sometimes other words: They have had ideas of Christ's speaking comfortable words to them. These things they have called having the inward call of Christ, hearing the voice of Christ spiritually in their hearts, having the witness of the Spirit, and the inward testimony of the love of Christ, &c.

The common and less considerate and understanding sort of people, are the more easily led into apprehensions that these things are spiritual things, because spiritual things being invisible, and not things that can be pointed forth with the finger, we are forced to use figurative expressions in speaking of them, and to borrow names from external and sensible objects to signify them by. Thus we call a clear apprehension of things spiritual by the name of *light*; and an having such an apprehension of such or such things, by the name of *seeing* such things; and the conviction of the judgment, and the persuasion of the will, by the word of Christ in the gospel, we signify by spiritually hearing the call of Christ: And the scripture itself abounds with such like figurative expressions. Persons hearing these often used, and having pressed upon them the necessity of having their eyes opened, and having a discovery of spiritual things, and seeing Christ in his glory, and having the inward call, and the like, they ignorantly look and wait for some such external discoveries, and imaginary views as have been spoken of; and when they have them are confident, that now their eyes are opened, now Christ has discovered himself to them, and they are his children; and hence are exceedingly affected and elevated with their deliverance and happiness, and many kinds of affections are at once set in a violent motion in them.

But it is exceedingly apparent that such ideas have nothing in them which is spiritual and divine, in the sense wherein it has been demonstrated that all gracious experiences are spiritual and divine. These external ideas are in no wise of such a sort, that they are entirely, and in their whole nature diverse from all that men have by nature, perfectly different from, and vastly above any sensation which it is possible a man should have by any natural sense or principle, so that in order to have them, a man must have a new spiritual and divine sense given him, in order to have any sensations of that sort: So far from this, that they are ideas of the same sort which we have by the external senses, that are some of the inferior powers of the human nature; they are merely ideas of external objects, or ideas of that nature, of the same outward,

sensitive kind; the same sort of sensations of mind (differing not in degree, but only in circumstances) that we have by those natural principles which are common to us with the beasts, viz. the five external senses. This is a low, miserable notion of spiritual sense, to suppose that it is only a conceiving or imagining that sort of ideas which we have by our animal senses, which senses the beasts have in as great perfection as we; it is, as it were, a turning Christ, or the divine nature in the soul, into a mere animal. There is nothing wanting in the soul, as it is by nature, to render it capable of being the subject of all these external ideas, without any new principles. A natural man is capable of having an idea, and a lively idea of shapes, and colors, and sounds, when they are absent, and as capable as a regenerate man is: So there is nothing supernatural in them. And it is known by abundant experience, that it is not the advancing or perfecting human nature, which makes persons more capable of having such lively and strong imaginary ideas, but that on the contrary, the weakness of body and mind, and distempers of body, make persons abundantly more susceptive of such impressions.*

As to a truly spiritual sensation, not only is the manner of its coming into the mind extraordinary, but the sensation itself is totally diverse from all that men have, or can have, in a state of nature, as has been shewn. But as to these external ideas, though the way of their coming into the mind is sometimes unusual, yet the ideas in themselves are not the better for that; they are still of no different sort from what men have by their senses; they are of no higher kind, nor a whit better. For instance, the external idea a man has now

* "Conceits and whimsies abound most in men of weak reason; children, and such as are cracked in their understanding, have most of them; strength of reason banishes them, as the sun does mists and vapors. But now the more rational any gracious person is, by so much more is he fixed and settled, and satisfied in the grounds of religion; yea, there is the highest and purest reason in religion; and when this change is wrought upon men, it is carried on in a rational way, Isa. i. 18, John xix. 9." *Flavel's Preparation for Sufferings*, Chap. vi.

of Christ hanging on the cross, and shedding his blood, is no better in itself, than the external idea that the Jews his enemies had, who stood round his cross, and saw this with their bodily eyes. The imaginary idea which men have now of an external brightness and glory of God, is no better than the idea the wicked congregation in the wilderness had of the external glory of the Lord at Mount Sinai, when they saw it with their bodily eyes; or any better than that idea which millions of cursed reprobates will have of the external glory of Christ at the day of judgment, who shall see, and have a very lively idea of ten thousand times greater external glory of Christ, than ever yet was conceived in any man's imagination:* Yea, the image of Christ, which men conceive in their imaginations, is not in its own nature, of any superior kind to the idea the Papists conceive of Christ, by the beautiful and affecting images of him which they see in their churches; (though the way of their receiving the idea may not be so bad) nor are the affections they have, if built primarily on such imaginations, any better than the affections raised in the ignorant people, by the sight of those images, which oftentimes are very great; especially when these images, through the craft of the priests, are made to move, and speak, and weep, and the like.† Merely the way of persons receiving

* "If any man should see, and behold Christ really and immediately, this is not the saving knowledge of him. I know the saints do know Christ as if immediately present; they are not strangers by their distance: If others have seen him more immediately, I will not dispute it. But if they have seen the Lord Jesus as immediately as if here on earth, yet Capernaum saw him so; nay, some of them were disciples for a time, and followed him, John vi. And yet the Lord was hid from their eyes. Nay, all the world shall see him in his glory, which shall amaze them; and yet this is far short of having the saving knowledge of him, which the Lord doth communicate to the elect. So that though you see the Lord so really, as that you become familiar with him, yet, Luke xiii. 26. "Lord, have we not eat and drank," &c....and so perish, *Shepard's Par. of the Ten Virgins*, P. I. p. 197, 198.

† "Satan is transformed into an angel of light: And hence we have heard that some have heard voices; some have seen the very blood of Christ dropping on them, and his wounds in his side: Some have seen a great light shining in the chamber; some have been wonderfully affected with their dreams;

these imaginary ideas, do not alter the nature of the ideas themselves that are received; let them be received in what way they will, they are still but external ideas, or ideas of outward appearances, and so are not spiritual. Yea, if men should actually receive such external ideas by the immediate power of the most high God upon their minds, they would not be spiritual, they would be no more than a common work of the Spirit of God; as is evident in fact, in the instance of Balaam, who had impressed on his mind, by God himself, a clear and lively outward representation or idea of Jesus Christ, as "the Star rising out of Jacob, when he heard the words of God, and knew the knowledge of the Most High, and saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance," Numb. xxiv. 16, 17, but yet had no manner of spiritual discovery of Christ; that Day Star never spiritually rose in his heart, he being but a natural man.

And as these external ideas have nothing divine or spiritual in their nature, and nothing but what natural men, without any new principles, are capable of; so there is nothing in their nature which requires that peculiar, inimitable and unparalleled exercise of the glorious power of God, in order to their production, which it has been shewn there is in the production of true grace. There appears to be nothing in their nature above the power of the devil. It is certainly not above the power of Satan to suggest thoughts to men; becaus otherwise he could not tempt them to sin. And if he can suggest any thoughts or ideas at all, doubtless imaginary ones, or ideas of things external, are not above his power;* for the

some in great distress have had inward witness, "Thy sins are forgiven;" and hence such liberty and joy, that they are ready to leap up and down the chamber. O adulterous generation! this is natural and usual with men, they would fain see Jesus, and have him present to give them peace; and hence Papists have his images. Wo to them that have no other manifested Christ, but such an one." *Shepard's Parable of the Ten Virgins*, P. I. p. 198.

* "Consider how difficult, yea and impossible it is to determine that such a voice, vision, or revelation is of God, and that Satan cannot feign or counterfeit it: Seeing he hath left no certain marks by which we may distinguish one spirit from another." *Flavel's causes and cures of mental terrors*, Cause 14.

external ideas men have are the lowest sort of ideas. These ideas may be raised only by impressions made on the body, by moving the animal spirits, and impressing the brain.... Abundant experience does certainly show, that alterations in the body will excite imaginary or external ideas in the mind; as often, in the case of a high fever, melancholy, &c. These external ideas are as much below the more intellectual exercises of the soul, as the body is a less noble part of man than the soul.

And there is not only nothing in the nature of these external ideas or imaginations of outward appearances, from whence we can infer that they are above the power of the devil; but it is certain also that the devil can excite, and often hath excited such ideas. They were external ideas which he excited in the dreams and visions of the false prophets of old, who were under the influence of lying spirits, that we often read of in scripture, as Deut. xiii. 1, 1 Kings xxii. 22. Isa. xxviii. 7. Ezek. xiii. 7. And they were external ideas that he often excited in the minds of the heathen priests, magicians and sorcerers, in their visions and ecstacies, and they were external ideas that he excited in the mind of the man Christ Jesus, when he shewed him all the kingdoms of the world, with the glory of them, when those kingdoms were not really in sight.

And if Satan, or any created being, has power to impress the mind with outward representations, then no particular sort of outward representations can be any evidence of a divine power. Almighty power is no more requisite to represent the shape of man to the imagination, than the shape of any thing else: There is no higher kind of power necessary to form in the brain one bodily shape or color than another: It needs a no more glorious power to represent the form of the body of a man, than the form of a chip or block; though it be of a very beautiful human body, with a sweet smile in his countenance, or arms open, or blood running from the hands, feet and side: That sort of power which can represent black or darkness to the imagination, can also represent white and shining brightness: The power and skill which can well and

exactly paint a straw, or a stick of wood, on a piece of paper or canvas; the same in kind, only perhaps further improved, will be sufficient to paint the body of a man, with great beauty and in royal majesty, or a magnificent city, paved with gold, full of brightness, and a glorious throne, &c. So it is no more than the same sort of power that is requisite to paint one as the other of these on the brain. The same sort of power that can put ink upon paper, can put on leaf gold. So that it is evident to a demonstration, if we suppose it to be in the devil's power to make any sort of external representation at all on the fancy (as without doubt it is, and never any one questioned it who believed there was a devil, that had any agency with mankind;) I say, if so, it is demonstrably evident, that a created power may extend to all kinds of external appearances and ideas in the mind. From hence it again clearly appears, that no such things have any thing in them that is spiritual, supernatural, and divine, in the sense in which it has been proved that all truly gracious experiences have. And though external ideas, through man's make and frame, do ordinarily in some degree attend spiritual experiences, yet these ideas are no part of their spiritual experience, any more than the motion of the blood, and beating of the pulse, that attends experiences, are a part of spiritual experience. And though undoubtedly, through men's infirmity in the present state, and especially through the weak constitution of some persons, gracious affections which are very strong, do excite lively ideas in the imagination; yet it is also undoubted, that when persons' affections are founded on imaginations, which is often the case, those affections are merely natural and common, because they are built on a foundation that is not spiritual; and so are entirely different from gracious affections, which, as has been proved, do evermore arise from those operations that are spiritual and divine.

These imaginations do oftentimes raise the carnal affections of men to an exceeding great height:* And no won-

* There is a remarkable passage of Mr. John Smith, in his discourse on the shortness of a Pharisaic righteousness, p. 370, 371, of his select discourses, describing that sort of religion which is built on such a foundation as I am

der, when the subjects of them have an ignorant, but undoubting persuasion, that they are divine manifestations, which the great Jehovah immediately makes to their souls, therein giving them testimonies in an extraordinary manner, of his high and peculiar favor.

here speaking of. I cannot forbear transcribing the whole of it. Speaking of a sort of Christians, whose life is nothing but a strong energy of fancy, he says, "Lest their religion might too grossly discover itself to be nothing else but a piece of art, there may be sometimes such extraordinary motions stirred up within them, which may prevent all their own thoughts, that they may seem to be a true operation of the divine life; when yet all this is nothing else but the energy of their own self love, touched with some fleshly apprehensions of divine things, and excited by them. There are such things in our Christian religion, when a carnal, unhallowed mind takes the chair and gets the expounding of them, may seem very delicious to the fleshly appetites of men; some doctrines and notions of free grace and justification, the magnificent titles of sons of God and heirs of heaven, ever flowing streams of joy and pleasure that blessed souls shall swim in to all eternity, a glorious paradise in the world to come, always springing up with well scented and fragrant beauties, a new Jerusalem paved with gold, and bespangled with stars, comprehending in its vast circuit such numberless varieties, that a busy curiosity may spend itself about to all eternity. I doubt not but that sometimes the most fleshly and earthly men, that fly in their ambition to the pomp of this world, may be so ravished with the conceits of such things as these, that they may seem to be made partakers of the powers of the world to come. I doubt not but that they might be much exalted with them, as the souls of crazed or distracted persons seem to be sometimes, when their fancies play with those quick and nimble spirits, which a distempered frame of body, and unnatural heat in their heads, beget within them. Thus may these blazing comets rise up above the moon, and climb higher than the sun; which yet, because they have no solid consistence of their own, and are of a base and earthly alloy, will soon vanish and fall down again, being only borne up by an external force. They may seem to themselves to have attained higher than those noble Christians that are gently moved by the natural force of true goodness: They seem to be *pleniores Deo* (i. e. more full of God) than those that are really informed and actuated by the divine Spirit, and do move on steadily and constantly in the way towards heaven. As the seed that was sown in stony ground, grew up, and lengthened out its blade faster, than that which was sown in the good and fruitful soil. And as the motions of our sense, and fancy, and passions, while our souls are in this mortal condition, sunk down deeply into the body, are many times more vigorous, and make stronger impressions upon us, than those of the higher powers of the soul, which are more subtle, and remote from these mixed animal perceptions: That devotion which is thus

Again, it is evident from what has been observed and proved of the manner in which gracious operations and effects in the heart are spiritual, supernatural and divine, that the immediate suggesting of the words of scripture to the mind has nothing in it which is spiritual.

I have had occasion to say something of this already; and what has been said may be sufficient to evince it; but if the reader bears in mind what has been said concerning the nature of spiritual influences and effects, it will be more abundantly manifest that this is no spiritual effect. For I suppose there is no person of common understanding, who will say or imagine that the bringing words (let them be what words they will) to the mind, is an effect of that nature which it is impossible the mind of a natural man, while he remains in a state of nature, should be the subject of, or any thing like it; or that it requires any new divine sense in the soul; or that the bringing sounds or letters to the mind, is an effect of so

seated, may seem to have more energy and life in it, than that which gently, and with a more delicate kind of touch spreads itself upon the understanding, and from thence mildly derives itself through our wills and affections. But however the former may be more boisterous for a time, yet this is of a more consistent, spermatical and thriving nature. For that proceeding indeed from nothing but a sensual and fleshly apprehension of God and true happiness, is but of a flitting and fading nature; and as the sensible powers and faculties grow more languid, or the sun of divine light shines more brightly upon us, these earthly devotions, like our culinary fires, will abate their heat and fervor. But a true celestial warmth will never be extinguished, because it is of an immortal nature; and being once seated vitally in the souls of men, it will regulate and order all the motions of it in a due manner, as the natural heat, radicated in the hearts of living creatures, hath the dominion and economy of the whole body under it. True religion is no piece of artifice; it is no boiling up of our imaginative powers, nor the glowing heats of passion; though these are too often mistaken for it, when in our jugglings in religion we cast a mist before our own eyes: But it is a new nature, informing the souls of men; it is a Godlike frame of spirit, discovering itself most of all in serene and clear minds, in deep humility, meekness, self denial, universal love to God and all true goodness, without partiality, and without hypocrisy, whereby we are taught to know God, and knowing him to love him, and conform ourselves as much as may be to all that perfection which shines in him.

high, holy, and excellent a nature, that it is impossible any created power should be the cause of it.

As the suggesting words of scripture to the mind, is only the exciting in the mind ideas of certain sounds or letters; so it is only one way of exciting ideas in the imagination; for sounds and letters are external things, that are the objects of the external senses of seeing and hearing. Ideas of certain marks upon paper, such as any of the twentyfour letters, in whatever order, or any sounds of the voice, are as much external ideas, as of any other shapes or sounds whatsoever; and therefore, by what has been already said concerning these external ideas, it is evident they are nothing spiritual; and if at any time the Spirit of God suggests these letters or sounds to the mind, this is a common, and not any special or gracious influence of that Spirit. And therefore it follows from what has been already proved, that those affections which have this effect for their foundation, are no spiritual or gracious affections. But let it be observed what it is that I say, viz. when this effect, even the immediate and extraordinary manner of words of scripture's coming to the mind, is that which excites the affections, and is properly the foundation of them, then these affections are not spiritual. It may be so, that persons may have gracious affections going with scriptures which come to their minds, and the Spirit of God may make use of those scriptures to excite them; when it is some spiritual sense, taste or relish they have of the divine and excellent things contained in those scriptures, that is the thing which excites their affections, and not the extraordinary and sudden manner of words being brought to their minds. They are affected with the instruction they receive from the words, and the view of the glorious things of God or Christ, and things appertaining to them, that they contain and teach; and not because the words came suddenly, as though some person had spoken them to them, thence concluding that God did as it were immediately speak to them. Persons oftentimes are exceedingly affected on this foundation; the words of some great and high promises of scripture came suddenly to their minds, and they look upon the words as directed im-

mediately by God to them, as though the words that moment proceeded out of the mouth of God as spoken to them: So that they take it as a voice from God, immediately revealing to them their happy circumstances, and promising such and such great things to them: And this it is that effects and elevates them. There is no new spiritual understanding of the divine things contained in the scripture, or new spiritual sense of the glorious things taught in that part of the Bible going before their affection, and being the foundation of it. All the new understanding they have, or think they have, to be the foundation of their affection, is this, that the words are spoken to them, because they come so suddenly and extraordinarily. And so this affection is built wholly on the sand! Because it is built on a conclusion for which they have no foundation. For, as has been shown, the sudden coming of the words to their minds, is no evidence that the bringing them to their minds in that manner was from God. And if it was true that God brought the words to their minds, and they certainly knew it, that would not be spiritual knowledge; it may be without any spiritual sense: Balaam might know that the words which God suggested to him, were indeed suggested to him by God, and yet have no spiritual knowledge. So that these affections which are built on that notion, that texts of scripture are sent immediately from God, are built on no spiritual foundation, and are vain and delusive. Persons who have their affections thus raised, if they should be inquired of, whether they have any new sense of the excellency of things contained in those scriptures, would probably say, *Yes*, without hesitation: But it is true no otherwise than thus, that when they have taken up that notion, that the words are spoken immediately to them, that makes them seem sweet to them, and they own the things which these scriptures say to them, for excellent things and wonderful things. As for instance supposing these were the words which were suddenly brought to their minds, *Fear not, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom*; they having confidently taken up a notion that the words were as it were immediately spoken from heaven to them, as an im-

mediate revelation that God was their Father, and had given the kingdom to them, they are greatly affected by it, and the words seem sweet to them ; and oh, they say, " they are excellent things that are contained in those words !" But the reason why the promise seems excellent to them, is only because they think it is made to them immediately ; all the sense they have of any glory in them, is only from selflove, and from their own imagined interest in the words ; not that they had any view or sense of the holy and glorious nature of the kingdom of heaven and the spiritual glory of that God who gives it, and of his excellent grace to sinful men, in offering and giving them this kingdom, of his own good pleasure preceding their imagined interest in these things, and their being affected by them, and being the foundation of their affection, and hope of an interest in them. On the contrary, they first imagine they are interested, and then are highly affected with that, and then can own these things to be excellent. So that the sudden and extraordinary way of the scripture's coming to their mind is plainly the first foundation of the whole ; which is a clear evidence of the wretched delusion they are under.

The first comfort of many persons, and what they call their conversion, is after this manner : After awakening and terror, some comfortable sweet promise comes suddenly and wonderfully to their minds ; and the manner of its coming makes them conclude it comes from God to them ; and this is the very thing that is all the foundation of their faith, and hope, and comfort : From hence they take their first encouragement to trust in God and in Christ, because they think that God, by some scripture so brought, has now already revealed to them that he loves them, and has already promised them eternal life, which is very absurd ; for every one of common knowledge of the principles of religion, knows that it is God's manner to reveal his love to men, and their interest in the promises, after they have believed, and not before, because they must first believe before they have any interest in the promises to be revealed. The Spirit of God is a Spirit of truth and not of lies : He does not bring scriptures to

men's minds, to reveal to them that they have an interest in God's favor and promises, when they have none, having not yet believed: Which would be the case, if God's bringing texts of scripture to men's minds, to reveal to them that their sins were forgiven, or that it was God's pleasure to give them the kingdom, or any thing of that nature, went before, and was the foundation of their first faith. No promise of the covenant of grace belongs to any man, until he has first believed in Christ; for it is by faith alone that we become interested in Christ, and the promises of the new covenant made in him: And therefore whatever spirit applies the promises of that covenant to a person who has not first believed, as being already his, must be a lying spirit, and that faith which is first built on such an application of promises is built upon a lie. God's manner is not to bring comfortable texts of scripture to give men assurance of his love, and that they shall be happy, before they have had a faith of dependence.* And if the scripture which comes to a person's

Mr. Stoddard in his *Guide to Christ*, p. 8. says, that "sometimes men, after they have been in trouble a while, have some promises come to them, with a great deal of refreshing; and they hope God has accepted them:" And says that, "In this case, the minister may tell them, that God never gives a faith of assurance, before he gives a faith of dependence; for he never manifests his love, until men are in a state of favor and reconciliation, which is by faith of dependence. When men have comfortable scriptures come to them, they are apt to take them as tokens of God's love: But men must be brought into Christ, by accepting the offer of the gospel, before they are fit for such manifestations. God's method is, first to make the soul accept of the offers of grace, and then to manifest his good estate unto him." And p. 76, speaking of them "that seem to be brought to lie at God's foot, and give an account of their closing with Christ, and that God has revealed Christ to them, and drawn their hearts to him, and they do accept of Christ," he says, "In this case, it is best to examine whether by that light that was given him, he saw Christ and salvation offered to him, or whether he saw that God loved him, or pardoned him: For the offer of grace and our acceptance goes before pardon, and therefore, much more before the knowledge of it.

† Mr. Shepard, in his *Parable of the Ten Virgins*, Part II. p. 15, says, that "Grace and the love of Christ (the fairest colors under the sun) may be pretended; but if you shall receive, under this appearance, that God witnesseth his love, first by an absolute promise, take heed there; for under this ap-

mind, be not so properly a promise, as an invitation; yet if he makes the sudden or unusual manner of the invitation's coming to his mind, the ground on which he believes that he is invited, it is not true faith; because it is built on that which is not the true ground of faith. True faith is built on no precarious foundation: But a determination that the words of such a particular text were, by the immediate power of God, suggested to the mind, at such a time, as though then spoken and directed by God to him, because the words came after such a manner, is wholly an uncertain and precarious determination, as has been now shown; and therefore is a false and sandy foundation for faith; and accordingly that faith which is built upon it is false. The only certain foundation which any person has to believe that he is invited to partake of the blessings of the gospel, is, that the word of God declares that persons so qualified as he is, are invited, and God who declares it, is true, and cannot lie. If a sinner be once convinced of the veracity of God, and that the scriptures are his word, he will need no more to convince and satisfy him that he is invited; for the scriptures are full of invitations to sinners, to the chief of sinners, to come and partake of the benefits of the gospel; he will not want any new speaking of God to him, what he hath spoken already will be enough with him.

pearance you may as well bring in immediate revelations, and from thence come to forsake the scriptures."

And in Part I. p. 86, he says, "Is Christ yours? Yes, I see it. How? By any word or promise? No; this is delusion" And p. 136, speaking of them that have no solid ground of peace, he reckons, "Those that content themselves with the revelation of the Lord's love without the sight of any work, or not looking to it." And says presently after, "The testimony of the Spirit does not make a man more a Christian, but only evidenceth it; so it is the nature of a witness not to make a thing to be true, but to clear and evidence it" And p. 140. Speaking of them that say they have the witness of the Spirit, that makes a difference between them and hypocrites, he says, "the witness of the Spirit makes not the first difference: For first a man is a believer, and in Christ, and justified, called and sanctified, before the Spirit does witness it; else the Spirit should witness to an untruth and lie."

As the first comfort of many persons, and their affections at the time of their supposed conversion, are built on such grounds as these which have been mentioned; so are their joys and hopes and other affections, from time to time afterwards. They have often particular words of scripture, sweet declarations and promises suggested to them, which by reason of the manner of their coming, they think are immediately sent from God to them, at that time, which they look upon as their warrant to take them, and which they actually make the main ground of their appropriating them to themselves, and of the comfort they take in them, and the confidence they receive from them. Thus they imagine a kind of conversation is carried on between God and them; and that God, from time to time, does, as it were, immediately speak to them, and satisfy their doubts, and testifies his love to them, and promises them supports and supplies, and his blessing in such and such cases, and reveals to them clearly their interest in eternal blessings. And thus they are often elevated, and have a course of a sudden and tumultuous kind of joys, mingled with a strong confidence, and high opinion of themselves; when indeed the main ground of these joys, and this confidence, is not any thing contained in, or taught by these scriptures, as they lie in the Bible, but the manner of their coming to them; which is a certain evidence of their delusion. There is no particular promise in the word of God that is the saint's, or is any otherwise made to him, or spoken to him, than all the promises of the covenant of grace are his, and are made to him and spoken to him;* though it be true that some of these promises may be more peculiarly adapted to his case than others, and God

* Mr. Shepard, in his Sound Believer, p. 159, of the late impression at Boston, says, "Embrace in thy bosom, not only some few promises, but all." And then he asks the question, "When may a Christian take a promise without presumption, as spoken to him?" He answers, "The rule is very sweet, but certain; when he takes all the scripture, and embraces it as spoken unto him, he may then take any particular promise boldly. My meaning is, when a Christian takes hold, and wrestles with God for the accomplishment of all the promises of the New Testament, when he sets all the commands before him, as a compass and guide to walk after, when he applies all

Again, it plainly appears from what has been demonstrated, that no revelation of secret facts by immediate suggestion, is any thing spiritual and divine, in that sense wherein gracious effects and operations are so.

By secret facts, I mean things that have been done, or are come to pass, or shall hereafter come to pass, which are secret in that sense that they do not appear to the senses, nor are known by any argumentation, or any evidence to reason, nor any other way, but only by that revelation by immediate suggestion of the ideas of them to the mind. Thus for instance, if it should be revealed to me, that the next year this land would be invaded by a fleet from France, or that such and such persons would then be converted, or that I myself should then be converted; not by enabling me to argue out these events from any thing which now appears in providence, but immediately suggesting and bearing in upon my mind, in an extraordinary manner, the apprehension or ideas of these facts, with a strong suggestion or impression on my mind, that I had no hand in myself, that these things would come to pass: Or if it should be revealed to me, that this day there is a battle fought between the armies of such and such powers in Europe; or that such a prince in Europe was this day converted, or is now in a converted state, having been converted formerly, or that one of my neighbors is converted, or that I myself am converted; not by having any other evidence of any of these facts, from whence I argue them, but an immediate extraordinary suggestion or excitation of these ideas, and a strong impression of them upon my mind: This is a

judge from a word. For though there is a word, which may give a man a dependence on Christ, without feeling any work, nay when he feels none, as absolute promises; yet no word giving assurance, but that which is made to some work, he that believeth, or is poor in spirit, &c. until that work is seen, has no assurance from that promise." *Shepard's Parable of the Ten Virgins*, Part I. p. 86.

"If God should tell a saint that he has grace, he might know it by believing the word of God: But it is not in this way that godly men do know that they have grace: It is not revealed in the word, and the Spirit of God doth not testify it to particular persons," *Stoddard's Nature of Saving Conversion*, p. 84, 85.

revelation of secret facts by immediate suggestion, as much as if the facts were future; for the facts being past, present, or future, alters not the case, as long as they are secret and hidden from my senses and reason, and not spoken of in scripture, nor known by me any other way than by immediate suggestion. If I have it revealed to me, that such a revolution is come to pass this day in the Ottoman Empire, it is the very same sort of revelation, as if it were revealed to me that such a revolution would come to pass there this day come twelvemonth; because, though one is present and the other future, yet both are equally hidden from me, any other way than by immediate revelation. When Samuel told Saul that the asses which he went to seek were found, and that his father had left caring for the asses and sorrowed for him; this was by the same kind of revelation, as that by which he told Saul, that in the plain of Tabor there should meet him three men going up to God to Bethel (1 Sam. x. 2, 3.) though one of these things was future, and the other was not. So when Elisha told the king of Israel the words that the king of Syria spake in his bed chamber, it was by the same kind of revelation with that by which he foretold many things to come.

It is evident that this revelation of secret facts by immediate suggestions, has nothing of the nature of a spiritual and divine operation, in the sense forementioned; there is nothing at all in the nature of the perceptions or ideas themselves, which are excited in the mind, that is divinely excellent, and so, far above all the ideas of natural men; though the manner of exciting the ideas be extraordinary. In those things which are spiritual, as has been shown, not only the manner of producing the effect, but the effect wrought is divine, and so vastly above all that can be in an unsanctified mind. Now simply the having an idea of facts, setting aside the manner of producing those ideas, is nothing beyond what the minds of wicked men are susceptible of, without any goodness in them; and they all, either have or will have, the knowledge of the truth of the greatest and most important facts, that have been, are, or shall be.

ret facts, are not gracious affections. Not but that it is
ble that such suggestions may be the occasion, or acci-
l cause of gracious affections; for so may a mistake and
sion; but it is never properly the foundation of gracious
tions: For gracious affections, as has been shewn, are
ne effects of an influence and operation which is spiritual,
rnatural, and divine. But there are many affections, and
affections, which some have, that have such kind of
gestions or revelations for their very foundation: They
upon these as spiritual discoveries, which is a gross de-
on, and this delusion is truly the spring whence their af-
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Here it may be proper to observe, that it is exceedingly
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And as to the extraordinary manner of producing the ideas or perception of facts, even by immediate suggestion, there is nothing in it, but what the minds of natural men, while they are yet natural men, are capable of, as is manifest in Balaam, and others spoken of in the scripture. And therefore it appears that there is nothing appertaining to this immediate suggestion of secret facts that is spiritual, in the sense in which it has been proved that gracious operations are so. If there be nothing in the ideas themselves, which is holy and divine, and so nothing but what may be in a mind not sanctified, then God can put them into the mind by immediate power, without sanctifying it. As there is nothing in the idea of a rainbow itself, that is of a holy and divine nature; so that nothing hinders but that an unsanctified mind may receive that idea; so God, if he pleases, and when he pleases, immediately, and in an extraordinary manner, may excite that idea in an unsanctified mind. So also, as there is nothing in the idea or knowledge that such and such particular persons are forgiven and accepted of God, and intitled to heaven, but what unsanctified minds may have and will have concerning many at the day of judgment; so God can, if he pleases, extraordinarily and immediately, suggest this to, and impress it upon an unsanctified mind now: There is no principle wanting in an unsanctified mind, to make it capable of such a suggestion or impression, nor is there any thing in it to exclude, or necessarily to prevent such a suggestion.

And if these suggestions of secret facts be attended with texts of scripture, immediately and extraordinarily brought to mind, about some other facts that seem in some respects similar, that does not make the operation to be of a spiritual and divine nature. For that suggestion of words of scripture is no more divine, than the suggestion of the facts themselves; as has been just now demonstrated: And two effects together, which are neither of them spiritual, cannot make up one complex effect, that is spiritual.

Hence it follows, from what has been already shown, and often repeated, that those affections which are properly founded on such immediate suggestions, or supposed suggestions,

of secret facts, are not gracious affections. Not but that it is possible that such suggestions may be the occasion, or accidental cause of gracious affections; for so may a mistake and delusion; but it is never properly the foundation of gracious affections: For gracious affections, as has been shewn, are all the effects of an influence and operation which is spiritual, supernatural, and divine. But there are many affections, and high affections, which some have, that have such kind of suggestions or revelations for their very foundation: They look upon these as spiritual discoveries, which is a gross delusion, and this delusion is truly the spring whence their affections flow.

Here it may be proper to observe, that it is exceedingly manifest from what has been said, that what many persons call the witness of the Spirit, that they are the children of God, has nothing in it spiritual and divine; and consequently that the affections built upon it are vain and delusive. That which many call the witness of the Spirit, is no other than an immediate suggestion and impression of that fact, otherwise secret, that they are converted, or made the children of God, and so that their sins are pardoned, and that God has given them a title to heaven. This kind of knowledge, viz. knowing that a certain person is converted, and delivered from hell, and intitled to heaven, is no divine sort of knowledge in itself. This sort of fact, is not that which requires any higher or more divine kind of suggestion, in order to impress it on the mind, than any other fact which Balaam had impressed on his mind. It requires no higher sort of idea or sensation, for a man to have the apprehension of his own conversion impressed upon him, than to have the apprehension of his neighbor's conversion, in like manner impressed: But God, if he pleased, might impress the knowledge of this fact, that he had forgiven his neighbor's sins, and given him a title to heaven, as well as any other fact, without any communication of his holiness: The excellency and importance of the fact, do not at all hinder a natural man's mind being susceptible of an immediate suggestion and impression of it. Balaam had

as excellent, and important, and glorious facts as this, immediately impressed on his mind, without any gracious influence; as particularly, the coming of Christ, and his setting up his glorious kingdom, and the blessedness of the spiritual Israel in his peculiar favor, and their happiness living and dying. Yea, Abimelech, king of the Philistines, had God's special favor to a particular person, even Abraham, revealed to him, Gen. xx. 6, 7. So it seems that he revealed to Laban his special favor to Jacob, see Gen. xxxi. 24, and Psal. cv. 15. And if a truly good man should have an immediate revelation or suggestion from God, after the like manner, concerning his favor to his neighbor, or himself; it would be no higher kind of influence; it would be no more than a common sort of influence of God's Spirit; as the gift of prophecy, and all revelation by immediate suggestion is; see 1 Cor. xiii. 2. And though it be true, that it is not possible that a natural man should have that individual suggestion from the Spirit of God, that he is converted, because it is not true; yet that does not arise from the nature of the influence, or because that kind of influence which suggests such excellent facts, is too high for him to be the subject of; but purely from the defect of a fact to be revealed. The influence which immediately suggests this fact, when it is true, is of no different kind from that which immediately suggests other true facts: And so the kind and nature of the influence, is not above what is common to natural men, with good men.

But this is a mean, ignoble notion of the witness of the Spirit of God given to his dear children, to suppose that there is nothing in the kind and nature of that influence of the Spirit of God, in imparting this high and glorious benefit, but what is common to natural men, or which men are capable of, and be in the mean time altogether unsanctified and the children of hell; and that therefore the benefit or gift itself has nothing of the holy nature of the Spirit of God in it, nothing of a vital communication of that Spirit. This notion greatly debases that high and most exalted kind of influence and operation of the Spirit, which there is in the true witness of the

Spirit.* That which is called the witness of the Spirit, Rom. viii. is elsewhere in the New Testament called the seal of the Spirit, 2 Cor. i. 22, Eph. i. 13, and iv. 13, alluding to the seal of princes, annexed to the instrument, by which they advanced any of their subjects to some high honor and dignity, or peculiar privilege in the kingdom, as a token of their special favor. Which is an evidence that the influence of the Spirit of the Prince of princes, in sealing his favorites, is far from being of a common kind; and that there is no effect of God's Spirit whatsoever, which is in its nature more divine; nothing more holy, peculiar, inimitable and distinguishing of divinity: As nothing is more royal than the royal seal; nothing more sacred, that belongs to a prince, and more peculiarly denoting what belongs to him; it being the very end and design of it, to be the most peculiar stamp and confirmation of the royal authority, and great note of distinction, whereby that which proceeds from the king, or belongs to him, may be known from every thing else. And therefore undoubtedly the seal of the great King of heaven and earth instamped on the heart, is something high and holy in its own nature, some excellent communication from the infinite fountain of divine

* The late venerable Stoddard, in his younger time, falling in with the opinion of some others, received this notion of the witness of the Spirit, by way of immediate suggestion; but, in the latter part of his life, when he had more thoroughly weighed things, and had more experience, he entirely rejected it; as appears by his treatise of the nature of saving conversion, p. 84. "The Spirit of God doth not testify to particular persons, that they are godly.... Some think that the Spirit of God doth testify it to some; and they ground it on Rom. viii. 16. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our Spirit, that we are the children of God." They think the Spirit reveals it by giving an inward testimony to it; and some godly men think they have had experience of it: But they may easily mistake; when the Spirit of God doth eminently stir up a spirit of faith, and sheds abroad the love of God in the heart, it is easy to mistake it for a testimony. And that is not the meaning of Paul's words. The Spirit reveals things to us, by opening our eyes to see what is revealed in the word; but the Spirit doth not reveal new truths, not revealed in the word. The Spirit discovers the grace of God in Christ, and thereby draws forth special actings of faith and love, which are evidential; but it doth not work in way of testimony. If God do but help us to receive the revelations in the word, we shall have comfort enough without new revelations."

beauty and glory; and not merely a making known a secret fact by revelation or suggestion; which is a sort of influence of the Spirit of God, that the children of the devil have often been the subjects of. The seal of the Spirit is a kind of effect of the Spirit of God on the heart, which natural men, while such, are so far from a capacity of being the subjects of, that they can have no manner of notion or idea of it; agreeable to Rev. ii. 17. "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it." There is all reason to suppose that what is here spoken of, is the same mark, evidence, or blessed token of special favor, which is elsewhere called the seal of the Spirit."

What has misled many in their notion of that influence of the Spirit of God we are speaking of, is the word *witness*, its being called the witness of the Spirit. Hence they have taken it, not to be any effect or work of the Spirit upon the heart, giving evidence, from whence men may argue that they are the children of God; but an inward immediate suggestion, as though God inwardly spoke to the man, and testified to him, and told him that he was his child, by a kind of a secret voice, or impression: Not observing the manner in which the word, witness or testimony, is often used in the New Testament, where such terms often signify, not only a mere declaring and asserting a thing to be true, but holding forth evidence from whence a thing may be argued, and proved to be true. Thus Heb. ii. 4. "God is said to bear witness, with signs and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost." Now these miracles, here spoken of, are called God's witness, not because they are of the nature of assertions, but evidences and proofs. So Acts xiv. 3. "Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands." And John v. 36. "But I have greater witness than that of John: For the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me." Again, chap. x. 25. "The

works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me." So the water and the blood are said to bear witness, 1 John v. 8, not that they spoke or asserted any thing, but they were proofs and evidences. So God's works of providence, in the rain and fruitful seasons, are spoken of as witnesses of God's being and goodness, i. e. they are evidences of these things. And when the scripture speaks of the seal of the Spirit, it is an expression which properly denotes, not an immediate voice or suggestion, but some work or effect of the Spirit, that is left as a divine mark upon the soul to be an evidence, by which God's children might be known. The seals of princes were the distinguishing marks of princes: And thus God's seal is spoken of as God's mark, Rev. vii. 3. "Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads;" together with Ezek. ix. 4. "Set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that are done in the midst thereof." When God sets his seal on a man's heart by his Spirit, there is some holy stamp, some image impressed and left upon the heart by the Spirit, as by the seal upon the wax. And this holy stamp, or impressed image, exhibiting clear evidence to the conscience, that the subject of it is the child of God, is the very thing which in scripture is called the seal of the Spirit, and the witness, or evidence of the Spirit. And this image instamped by the Spirit on God's childrens' hearts, is his own image; that is the evidence by which they are known to be God's children, that they have the image of their Father stamped upon their hearts by the Spirit of adoption. Seals anciently had engraven on them two things, viz. the image and the name of the person whose seal it was. Therefore when Christ says to his spouse, Cant. viii. 6. "Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm;" it is as much as to say let my name and image remain impressed there. The seals of princes were wont to bear their image; so that what they set their seal and royal mark upon, had their image left on it. It was the manner of princes of old to have their image engraven on their jewels and

precious stones; and the image of Augustus engraven on a precious stone, was used as the seal of the Roman emperors, in Christ's and the Apostle's times.* And the saints are the jewels of Jesus Christ, the great potentate, who has the possession of the empire of the universe; and these jewels have his image instamped upon them, by his royal signet, which is the Holy Spirit. And this is undoubtedly what the scripture means by the seal of the Spirit; especially when it is stamped in so fair and clear a manner, as to be plain to the eye of conscience; which is what the scripture calls our spirit. This is truly an effect that is spiritual, supernatural, and divine. This is in itself of a holy nature, being a communication of the divine nature and beauty. That kind of influence of the Spirit which gives and leaves this stamp upon the heart, is such that no natural man can be the subject of any thing of the like nature with it. This is the highest sort of witness of the Spirit, which it is possible the soul should be the subject of: If there were any such thing as a witness of the Spirit by immediate suggestion or revelation, this would be vastly more noble and excellent, and as much above it as the heaven is above the earth. This the devil cannot imitate; as to an inward suggestion of the Spirit of God, by a kind of secret voice speaking, and immediately asserting and revealing a fact, he can do that which is a thousand times so like to this, as he can to that holy and divine effect, or work of the Spirit of God, which has now been spoken of.

Another thing which is a full proof that the seal of the Spirit is no revelation of any fact by immediate suggestion, but is grace itself in the soul, is, that the seal of the Spirit is called in the scripture, the *earnest of the Spirit*. It is very plain that the seal of the Spirit, is the same thing with the earnest of the Spirit by 2 Cor. i. 22. "Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts"..... And Eph. i. 13, 14. "In whom, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the pur-

* See Chamber's Dictionary, under the word ENGRAVING.

chased possession unto the praise of his glory." Now the earnest is part of the money agreed for, given in hand, as a token of the whole, to be paid in due time; a part of the promised inheritance granted now, in token of full possession of the whole hereafter. But surely that kind of communication, of the Spirit of God, which is of the nature of eternal glory, is the highest and most excellent kind of communication, something that is in its own nature spiritual, holy and divine, and far from any thing that is common: And therefore high above any thing of the nature of inspiration, or revelation of hidden facts by suggestion of the Spirit of God, which many natural men have had. What is the earnest, and beginning of glory, but grace itself, especially in the more lively and clear exercises of it? It is not prophecy, nor tongues, nor knowledge, but that more excellent divine thing, "charity that never faileth," which is a prelibation and beginning of the light, sweetness and blessedness of heaven, that world of love or charity. It is grace that is the seed of glory and dawning of glory in the heart, and therefore it is grace that is the earnest of the future inheritance. What is it that is the beginning or earnest of eternal life in the soul, but spiritual life; and what is that but grace? The inheritance that Christ has purchased for the elect, is the Spirit of God; not in any extraordinary gifts, but in his vital indwelling in the heart, exerting and communicating himself there, in his own proper, holy, or divine nature; and this is the sum total of the inheritance that Christ purchased for the elect. For so are things constituted in the affair of our redemption, that the Father provides the Saviour or purchaser, and the purchase is made of him; and the Son is the purchaser and the price; and the Holy Spirit is the great blessing or inheritance purchased, as is intimated, Gal. iii. 13, 14, and hence the Spirit often is spoken of as the sum of the blessings promised in the gospel, Luke xxiv. 49. Acts i. 4, and chap. ii. 38, 39. Gal. iii. 14. Eph. i. 13. This inheritance was the grand legacy which Christ left his disciples and church, in his last will and testament, John chap. xiv. xv. xvi. This is the sum of the blessings of eternal life, which shall be given

in heaven. (Compare John vii. 37, 38, 39, and John iv. 14, with Rev. xxi. 6, and xxii. 1, 17.) It is through the vital communications and indwelling of the Spirit that the saints have all their light, life, holiness, beauty, and joy in heaven; and it is through the vital communications and indwelling of the same Spirit that the saints have all light, life, holiness, beauty and comfort on earth; but only communicated in less measure. And this vital indwelling of the Spirit in the saints, in this less measure and small beginning, is, "the earnest of the Spirit, the earnest of the future inheritance, and the first fruits of the Spirit," as the apostle calls it, Rom. viii. 22, where, by "the first fruits of the Spirit," the apostle undoubtedly means the same vital, gracious principle that he speaks of in all the preceding part of the chapter, which he calls Spirit, and sets in opposition to flesh or corruption..... Therefore this earnest of the Spirit, and first fruits of the Spirit, which has been shown to be the same with the seal of the Spirit, is the vital, gracious, sanctifying communication and influence of the Spirit, and not any immediate suggestion or revelation of facts by the Spirit.*

And indeed the apostle, when in that, Rom. viii. 16, he speaks of the Spirit's bearing witness with our spirit that we are the children of God, does sufficiently explain himself, if his words were but attended to. What is here expressed is connected with the two preceding verses, as resulting from what the apostle had said there, as every reader may see. The three verses together are thus, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God: For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye

* "After a man is in Christ, not to judge by the work, is not to judge by the Spirit. For the apostle makes the earnest of the Spirit to be the seal..... Now earnest is part of the money bargained for; the beginning of heaven, of the light and life of it. He that sees not that the Lord is his by that, sees no God of his at all. Oh, therefore, do not look for a Spirit, without a word to reveal, nor a word to reveal, without seeing and feeling of some work first. I thank the Lord, I do but pity those that think otherwise. If a sheep of Christ, Oh, wonder not." *Shepard's Par.* P. I. p. 26.

have received the spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba Father: The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God." Here, what the apostle says, if we take it together, plainly shews that what he has respect to, when he speaks of the Spirit's giving us witness or evidence that we are God's children, is his dwelling in us, and leading us, as a spirit of adoption, or spirit of a child, disposing us to behave towards God as to a Father. This is the witness or evidence which the apostle speaks of that we are children, that we have the spirit of children, or spirit of adoption. And what is that but the spirit of love? There are two kinds of spirits the apostle speaks of, the spirit of a slave, or the spirit of bondage, that is fear; and the spirit of a child, or spirit of adoption, and that is love. The apostle says, we have not received the spirit of bondage, or of slaves, which is a spirit of fear; but we have received the more ingenuous noble spirit of children, a spirit of love, which naturally disposes us to go to God as children to a father, and behave towards God as children. And this is the evidence or witness which the Spirit of God gives us that we are his children. This is the plain sense of the apostle; and so undoubtedly he here is speaking of the very same way of casting out doubting and fear and the spirit of bondage, which the Apostle John speaks of, 1 John iv. 18, viz. by the prevailing of love, that is the spirit of a child. The spirit of bondage works by fear, the slave fears the rod: But love cries, Abba Father; it disposes us to go to God, and behave ourselves towards God as children; and it gives us clear evidence of our union to God as his children, and so casts out fear. So that it appears that the witness of the Spirit the apostle speaks of, is far from being any whisper, or immediate suggestion or revelation; but that gracious holy effect of the Spirit of God in the hearts of the saints, the disposition and temper of children, appearing in sweet childlike love to God, which casts out fear, or a spirit of a slave.

And the same thing is evident from all the context: It is plain the apostle speaks of the Spirit, over and over again, as dwelling in the hearts of the saints, as a gracious principle,

set in opposition to the flesh or corruption: And so he does in the words that immediately introduce this passage we are upon, ver. 13. "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: But if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the flesh, ye shall live."

Indeed it is past doubt with me, that the apostle has a more special respect to the spirit of grace, or the spirit of love, or spirit of a child, in its more lively actings; for it is perfect love, or strong love only, which so witnesses or evidences that we are children, as to cast out fear, and wholly deliver from the spirit of bondage. The strong and lively exercises of a spirit of childlike, evangelical, humble love to God, give clear evidence of the soul's relation to God as his child; which does very greatly and directly satisfy the soul. And though it be far from being true, that the soul in this case, judges only by an immediate witness, without any sign or evidence; for it judges and is assured by the greatest sign and clearest evidence; yet in this case the saint stands in no need of multiplied signs, or any long reasoning upon them. And though the sight of his relative union with God, and his being in his favor, is not without a medium, because he sees it by that medium, viz. his love; yet his sight of the union of his heart to God is immediate: Love, the bond of union, is seen intuitively: The saint sees and feels plainly the union between his soul and God; it is so strong and lively, that he cannot doubt of it. And hence he is assured that he is a child. How can he doubt whether he stands in a childlike relation to God, when he plainly sees a childlike union between God and his soul, and hence does boldly, and as it were naturally and necessarily cry, Abba, Father?

And whereas the apostle says, the Spirit bears witness with our spirits; by our spirit here, is meant our conscience, which is called the spirit of man, Prov. xx. 27. "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly." We elsewhere read of the witness of this spirit of ours, 2 Cor. i. 12. "For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience." And 1 John iii. 19, 20, 21. "And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and

shall assure our hearts before him. For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God." When the Apostle Paul speaks of the Spirit of God bearing witness with our spirit, he is not to be understood of two spirits that are two separate, collateral, independent witnesses; but it is by one that we receive the witness of the other: The Spirit of God gives the evidence by infusing and shedding abroad the love of God, the spirit of a child, in the heart, and our spirit, or our conscience, receives and declares this evidence for our rejoicing.

Many have been the mischiefs that have arisen from that false and delusive notion of the witness of the Spirit, that it is a kind of inward voice, suggestion, or declaration from God to man, that he is beloved of him, and pardoned, elected, or the like, sometimes with, and sometimes without a text of scripture; and many have been the false, and vain (though very high) affections that have arisen from hence. And it is to be feared that multitudes of souls have been eternally undone by it. I have therefore insisted the longer on this head. But I proceed now to a second characteristic of gracious affections.

II. The first objective ground of gracious affections, is the transcendently excellent and amiable nature of divine things as they are themselves; and not any conceived relation they bear to self, or selfinterest.

I say, that the supremely excellent nature of divine things, is the first, or primary and original objective foundation of the spiritual affections of true saints; for I do not suppose that all relation which divine things bear to themselves, and their own particular interest, is wholly excluded from all influence in their gracious affections. For this may have, and indeed has, a secondary and consequential influence in those affections that are truly holy and spiritual, as I shall show how by and by.

It was before observed, that the affection of love is, as it were the fountain of all affection; and particularly that Christ-

ian love is the fountain of all gracious affections: Now the divine excellency and glory of God and Jesus Christ, the word of God, the works of God, and the ways of God, &c. is the primary reason why a true saint loves these things; and not any supposed interest that he has in them, or any conceived benefit that he has received from them, or shall receive from them, or any such imagined relation which they bear to his interest, that selflove can properly be said to be the first foundation of his love to these things.

Some say that all love arises from selflove; and that it is impossible in the nature of things, for any man to have any love to God, or any other being, but that love to himself must be the foundation of it. But I humbly suppose it is for want of consideration that they say so. They argue, that whoever loves God, and so desires his glory or the enjoyment of him, he desires these things as his own happiness; the glory of God, and the beholding and enjoying his perfections, are considered as things agreeable to him, tending to make him happy; he places his happiness in them, and desires them as things, which (if they were obtained) would be delightful to him, or would fill him with delight and joy, and so make him happy. And so, they say, it is from self love, or a desire of his own happiness, that he desires God should be glorified, and desires to behold and enjoy his glorious perfections. But then they ought to consider a little further, and inquire how the man came to place his happiness in God's being glorified, and in contemplating and enjoying God's perfections.... There is no doubt but that after God's glory, and the beholding his perfections, are become so agreeable to him, that he places his highest happiness in these things, then he will desire them, as he desires his own happiness. But how came these things to be so agreeable to him, that he esteems it his highest happiness to glorify God, &c.? Is not this the fruit of love? A man must first love God, or have his heart united to him, before he will esteem God's good his own, and before he will desire the glorifying and enjoying of God as his happiness. It is not strong arguing, that because after a man has his heart united to God in love, as a fruit of this,

he desires his glory and enjoyment, as his own happiness, that therefore a desire of this happiness of his own must needs be the cause and foundation of his love; unless it be strong arguing, that because a father begat a son, therefore his son certainly begat him. If after a man loves God, and has his heart so united to him, as to look upon God as his chief good, and on God's good as his own, it will be a consequence and fruit of this, that even selflove, or love to his own happiness, will cause him to desire the glorifying and enjoying of God; it will not thence follow, that this very exercise of selflove, went before his love to God, and that his love to God was a consequence and fruit of that. Something else, entirely distinct from selflove, might be the cause of this, viz. a change made in the views of his mind, and relish of his heart; whereby he apprehends a beauty, glory, and supreme good, in God's nature, as it is in itself. This may be the thing that first draws his heart to him, and causes his heart to be united to him, prior to all considerations of his own interest or happiness, although after this, and as a fruit of this, he necessarily seeks his interest and happiness in God.

There is such a thing as a kind of love or affection that a man may have towards persons or things, which does properly arise from selflove; a preconceived relation to himself, or some respect already manifested by another to him, or some benefit already received or depended on, is truly the first foundation of his love, and what his affection does wholly arise from; and is what precedes any relish of, or delight in the nature and qualities inherent in the being beloved, as beautiful and amiable. When the first thing that draws a man's benevolence to another, is the beholding those qualifications and properties in him, which appear to him lovely in themselves; and the subject of them, on this account, worthy of esteem and good will, love arises in a very different manner, than when it first arises from some gift bestowed by another or depended on from him, as a judge loves and favors a man that has bribed him; or from the relation he supposes another has to him, as a man who loves another, because he looks upon him as his child. When love to an-

other arises thus, it does truly and properly arise from self love.

That kind of affection to God or Jesus Christ, which does thus properly arise from selflove, cannot be a truly gracious and spiritual love, as appears from what has been said already: For selflove is a principle entirely natural, and as much in the hearts of devils as angels; and therefore surely nothing that is the mere result of it can be supernatural and divine, in the manner before described.* Christ plainly speaks of this kind of love, as what is nothing beyond the love of wicked men, Luke vi. 32. "If ye love them that love you, what thank have ye? For sinners also love those that love them." And the devil himself knew that that kind of respect to God which was so mercenary, as to be only for benefits received or depended on (which is all one) is worthless in the sight of God; otherwise he never would have made use of such a slander before God, against Job, as in Job i. 9, 10. "Doth Job serve God for nought? Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house," &c. Nor would God ever have implicitly allowed the objection to have been good, in case the accusation had been true, by allowing that that matter should be tried, and that Job should be so dealt with, that it might appear in the event, whether Job's respect to God was thus mercenary or no, and by putting the proof of the sincerity and goodness of his respect upon that issue.

It is unreasonable to think otherwise, than that the first foundation of a true love to God, is that whereby he is in himself lovely, or worthy to be loved, or the supreme loveliness of his nature. This is certainly what makes him chiefly amiable. What chiefly makes a man, or any creature lovely, is his excellency; and so what chiefly renders God lovely, and must undoubtedly be the chief ground of true love, is his excellency. God's nature, or the divinity, is infinitely excel-

* "There is a natural love to Christ, as to one that doth thee good, and for thine own ends; and spiritual, for himself, whereby the Lord only is exalted." *Shepard's Par. of the Ten Virgins*, P. I. p. 25.

lent; yea it is infinite beauty, brightness, and glory itself. But how can that be true love of this excellent and lovely nature, which is not built on the foundation of its true loveliness? How can that be true love of beauty and brightness, which is not for beauty and brightness' sake? How can that be a true prizing of that which is in itself infinitely worthy and precious, which is not for the sake of its worthiness and preciousness? This infinite excellency of the divine nature, as it is in itself, is the true ground of all that is good in God in any respect; but how can a man truly and rightly love God, without loving him for that excellency in him, which is the foundation of all that is in any manner of respect good or desirable in him? They whose affection to God is founded first on his profitableness to them, their affection begins at the wrong end; they regard God only for the utmost limit of the stream of divine good, where it touches them, and reaches their interest; and have no respect to that infinite glory of God's nature, which is the original good, and the true fountain of all good, the first fountain of all loveliness of every kind, and so the first foundation of all true love.

A natural principle of selflove may be the foundation of great affections towards God and Christ, without seeing any thing of the beauty and glory of the divine nature. There is a certain gratitude that is a mere natural thing. Gratitude is one of the natural affections of the soul of man, as well as anger; and there is a gratitude that arises from selflove, very much in the same manner that anger does. Anger in men is an affection excited against another, or in opposition to another, for something in him that crosses selflove: Gratitude is an affection one has towards another, for loving him, or gratifying him, or for something in him that suits selflove. And there may be a kind of gratitude, without any true or proper love; as there may be anger without any proper hatred, as in parents towards their children, that they may be angry with, and yet at the same time have a strong habitual love to them. This gratitude is the principle which is an exercise in wicked men, in that which Christ declares concerning them, in the 6th of Luke, where he says, sinners love those that love them;

and which he declares concerning even the publicans, who were some of the most carnal and profligate sort of men, Mat. v. 46. This is the very principle that is wrought upon by bribery, in unjust judges; and it is a principle that even the brute beasts do exercise; a dog will love his master that is kind to him. And we see in innumerable instances, that mere nature is sufficient to excite gratitude in men, or to affect their hearts with thankfulness to others for kindnesses received; and sometimes towards them, whom at the same time they have an habitual enmity against. Thus Saul was once and again greatly affected, and even dissolved with gratitude towards David, for sparing his life, and yet remained an habitual enemy to him. And as men, from mere nature, may be thus affected towards men; so they may towards God. There is nothing hinders, but that the same selflove may work after the same manner towards God as towards men. And we have manifest instances of it in scripture; as indeed the children of Israel, who sang God's praises at the Red Sea, but soon forgat God's works: And in Naaman the Syrian, who was greatly affected with the miraculous cure of his leprosy, so as to have his heart engaged thenceforward to worship the God that had healed him, and him only, excepting when it would expose him to be ruined in his temporal interest. So was Nebuchadnezzar greatly affected with God's goodness to him, in restoring him to his reason and kingdom, after his dwelling with the beasts.

Gratitude being thus a natural principle, it renders ingratitude so much the more vile and heinous; because it shews a dreadful prevalence of wickedness, when it even overbears and suppresses the better principles of human nature: As it is mentioned as an evidence of the high degree of the wickedness of many of the heathen, that they were without natural affection, Rom. ii. 31. But that the want of gratitude, or natural affection, is evidence of an high degree of vice, is no argument that all gratitude and natural affection has the nature of virtue, or saving grace.

Selflove, through the exercise of mere natural gratitude, may be the foundation of a sort of love to God many ways.

A kind of love may arise from a false notion of God, that men have been educated in, or have some way imbibed; as though he were only goodness and mercy, and not revenging justice; or as though the exercises of his goodness were necessary, and not free and sovereign; or as though his goodness were dependent on what is in them, and as it were constrained by them. Men on such grounds as these, may love a God of their own forming in their imaginations, when they are far from loving such a God as reigns in heaven.

Again, selflove may be the foundation of an affection in men towards God, through a great insensibility of their state with regard to God, and for want of conviction of conscience to make them sensible how dreadfully they have provoked God to anger; they have no sense of the heinousness of sin, as against God, and of the infinite and terrible opposition of the holy nature of God against it: And so having formed in their minds such a God as suits them, and thinking God to be such an one as themselves, who favors and agrees with them, they may like him very well, and feel a sort of love to him, when they are far from loving the true God. And men's affections may be much moved towards God, from selflove, by some remarkable outward benefits received from God; as it was with Naaman, Nebuchadnezzar, and the children of Israel at the Red Sea.

Again, a very high affection towards God, may, and often does arise in men, from an opinion of the favor and love of God to them, as the first foundation of their love to him. After awakenings and distress, through fears of hell, they may suddenly get a notion, through some impression on their imagination, or immediate suggestion with or without texts of scripture, or by some other means, that God loves them, and has forgiven their sins, and made them his children; and this is the first thing that causes their affections to flow towards God and Jesus Christ: And then after this, and upon this foundation, many things in God may appear lovely to them, and Christ may seem excellent. And if such persons are asked, whether God appears lovely and amiable in himself? They would perhaps readily answer, Yes; when indeed, if

the matter be strictly examined, this good opinion of God was purchased and paid for before ever they afforded it, in the distinguishing and infinite benefits they imagined they received from God: And they allow God to be lovely in himself, no otherwise than that he has forgiven them, and accepted them, and loves them above most in the world, and has engaged to improve all his infinite power and wisdom in preferring, dignifying, and exalting them, and will do for them just as they would have him. When once they are firm in this apprehension, it is easy to own God and Christ to be lovely and glorious, and to admire and extol them. It is easy for them to own Christ to be a lovely person, and the best in the world, when they are first firm in it, that he, though Lord of the universe, is captivated with love to them, and has his heart swallowed up in them, and prizes them far beyond most of their neighbors, and loved them from eternity, and died for them, and will make them reign in eternal glory with him in heaven. When this is the case with carnal men, their very lusts will make him seem lovely: Pride itself will prejudice them in favor of that which they call Christ: Selfish, proud man naturally calls that lovely that greatly contributes to his interest, and gratifies his ambition.

And as this sort of persons begin, so they go on. Their affections are raised from time to time, primarily on this foundation of selflove and a conceit of God's love to them. Many have a false notion of communion with God, as though it were carried on by impulses, and whispers, and external representations, immediately made to their imagination. These things they often have; which they take to be manifestations of God's great love to them, and evidences of their high exaltation above others of mankind; and so their affections are often renewedly set agoing.

Whereas the exercises of true and holy love in the saints arise in another way. They do not first see that God loves them, and then see that he is lovely, but they first see that God is lovely, and that Christ is excellent and glorious, and their hearts are first captivated with this view, and the exercises of their love are wont from time to time to begin here,

and to arise primarily from these views; and then, consequentially, they see God's love, and great favor to them.* The saint's affections begin with God; and selflove has a hand in these affections consequentially, and secondarily only. On the contrary, those false affections begin with self, and an acknowledgment of an excellency in God, and an affectedness with it, is only consequential and dependent. In the love of the true saint God is the lowest foundation; the love of the excellency of his nature is the foundation of all the affections which come afterwards, wherein selflove is concerned as an handmaid: On the contrary, the hypocrite lays himself at the bottom of all, as the first foundation, and lays on God as the superstructure; and even his acknowledgment of God's glory itself depends on his regard to his private interest.

Selflove may not only influence men, so as to cause them to be affected with God's kindness to them separately; but also with God's kindness to them as parts of a community: As a natural principle of selflove, without any other principle, may be sufficient to make a man concerned for the interest of the nation to which he belongs: As for instance, in the present war, selflove may make natural men rejoice at the successes of our nation, and sorry for their disadvantages, they being concerned as members of the body. So the same natural principle may extend further, and even to the world of mankind, and might be affected with the benefits the inhabitants of the earth have, beyond those of the inhabitants of other planets, if we knew that such there were, and how it was with them. So this principle may cause men to be affected with the benefits that mankind have received beyond the fallen angels. And hence men, from this principle, may be much affected with the wonderful goodness of God to mankind, his great goodness in giving his Son to die for fallen man, and the marvellous love of Christ in suffering such

* "There is a seeing of Christ after a man believes, which is Christ in his love, &c. But I speak of that first sight of him that precedes the second act of faith; and it is an intuitive, or real sight of him as he is in his glory." *Shepard's Par. of the Ten Virgins*, Part I. p. 74.

great things for us, and with the great glory they hear God has provided in heaven for us; looking on themselves as persons concerned and interested, as being some of this species of creatures so highly favored: The same principle of natural gratitude may influence men here, as in the case of personal benefits.

But these things that I have said do by no means imply, that all gratitude to God is a mere natural thing, and that there is no such thing as a spiritual gratitude, which is a holy and divine affection: They imply no more, than that there is a gratitude which is merely natural, and that when persons have affections towards God only or primarily for benefits received, their affection is only the exercise of a natural gratitude. There is doubtless such a thing as a gracious gratitude, which does greatly differ from all that gratitude which natural men experience. It differs in the following respects:

1. True gratitude or thankfulness to God for his kindness to us, arises from a foundation laid before, of love to God for what he is in himself; whereas a natural gratitude has no such antecedent foundation. The gracious stirrings of grateful affection to God, for kindness received, always are from a stock of love already in the heart, established in the first place on other grounds, viz. God's own excellency; and hence the affections are disposed to flow out on occasions of God's kindness. The saint, having seen the glory of God, and his heart being overcome by it, and captivated with love to him on that account, his heart hereby becomes tender, and easily affected with kindnesses received. If a man has no love to another, yet gratitude may be moved by some extraordinary kindness; as in Saul towards David: But this is not the same kind of thing, as a man's gratitude to a dear friend, that his heart was before possessed with a high esteem of, and love to; whose heart by this means became tender towards him, and more easily affected with gratitude, and affected in another manner. Selflove is not excluded from a gracious gratitude; the saints love God for his kindness to them, Psal. cxvi. 1. "I love the Lord, because he hath heard the voice of my supplication." But something else is included; and another love

prepares the way, and lays the foundation for these grateful affections.

2. In a gracious gratitude men are affected with the attribute of God's goodness and free grace, not only as they are concerned in it, or as it affects their interest, but as a part of the glory and beauty of God's nature. That wonderful and unparalleled grace of God, which is manifested in the work of redemption, and shines forth in the face of Jesus Christ, is infinitely glorious in itself, and appears so to the angels; it is a great part of the moral perfection and beauty of God's nature. This would be glorious, whether it were exercised towards us or no; and the saint who exercises a gracious thankfulness for it, sees it to be so, and delights in it as such: Though his concern in it serves the more to engage his mind and raise the attention and affection; and selflove here assists as an handmaid, being subservient to higher principles, to lead forth the mind to the view and contemplation, and engage and fix the attention, and heighten the joy and love..... God's kindness to them is a glass that God sets before them, wherein to behold the beauty of the attribute of God's goodness: The exercises and displays of this attribute, by this means, are brought near to them, and set right before them. So that in a holy thankfulness to God, the concern our interest has in God's goodness, is not the first foundation of our being affected with it; that was laid in the heart before, in that stock of love which was to God, for his excellency in himself, that makes the heart tender and susceptive of such impressions from his goodness to us. Nor is our own interest, or the benefits we have received, the only, or the chief objective ground of the present exercises of the affection, but God's goodness, as part of the beauty of his nature; although the manifestations of that lovely attribute, set immediately before our eyes, in the exercises of it for us, be the special occasion of the mind's attention to that beauty, at that time, and serves to fix the attention, and heighten the affection.

Some may perhaps be ready to object against the whole that has been said, that text, 1 John iv. 19. "We love him,

secondary joy in that so excellent a Saviour, and such excellent grace is theirs.* But that which is the true saints superstructure is the hypocrites foundation. When they hear of the wonderful things of the gospel of God's great love in sending his Son, of Christ's dying love to sinners, and the great things Christ has purchased and promised to the saints, and hear these thing livelily and eloquently set forth; they may hear with a great deal of pleasure, and be lifted up with what they hear; but if their joy be examined, it will be found to have no other foundation than this, that they look upon these things as theirs, all this exalts them, they love to hear of the great love of Christ, so vastly distinguishing some from others; for selflove, and even pride itself makes them affect great distinction from others. No wonder, in this confident opinion of their own good estate, that they feel well under such doctrine, and are pleased in the highest degree, in hearing how much God and Christ makes of them. So that their joy is really a joy in themselves, and not in God.

And because the joy of hypocrites is in themselves, hence it comes to pass that in their rejoicings and elevations, they are wont to keep their eye upon themselves: Having received what they call spiritual discoveries or experiences, their minds are taken up about them, admiring their own experiences; and what they are principally taken and elevated with, is not the glory of God, or beauty of Christ, but the beauty of their experiences. They keep thinking with themselves, What a good experience is this! What a great discovery is this! What wonderful things have I met with! And so they put their experiences in the place of Christ, and his beauty

* Dr. Owen on the Spirit, p. 199, speaking of a common work of the Spirit, says, "The effects of this work on the mind, which is the first subject affected with it, proceeds not so far as to give delight, complacency and satisfaction, in the lovely spiritual nature and excellency of the things revealed unto it. The true nature of saving illumination consists in this, that it gives the mind such a direct intuitive insight and prospect into spiritual things, as that in their own spiritual nature they suit, please, and satisfy it; so that it is transformed into them, cast into the mould of them, and rests in them.

and fulness; and instead of rejoicing in Christ Jesus, they rejoice in their admirable experiences; instead of feeding and feasting their souls in the view of what is without them, viz. the innate, sweet refreshing amiableness of the things exhibited in the gospel, their eyes are off from these things, or at least they view them only as it were sideways; but the object that fixes their contemplation, is their experience; and they are feeding their souls, and feasting a selfish principle, with a view of their discoveries: They take more comfort in their discoveries than in Christ discovered, which is the the true notion of living upon experiences and frames, and not a using experiences as the signs on which they rely for evidence of their good estate, which some call living on experiences; though it be very observable, that some of them who do so are most notorious for living upon experiences, according to the true notion of it.

The affections of hypocrites are very often after this manner; they are first much affected with some impression on their imagination, or some impulse which they take to be an immediate suggestion or testimony from God of his love and their happiness, and high privileges in some respect, either with or without a text of scripture; they are mightily taken with this as a great discovery, and hence arise high affections. And when their affections are raised, then they view those high affections, and call them great and wonderful experiences; and they have a notion that God is greatly pleased with those affections; and this affects them more; and so they are affected with their affections. And thus their affections rise higher and higher, until they sometimes are perfectly swallowed up: And self conceit, and a fierce zeal rises withal; and all is built like a castle in the air, on no other foundation but imagination, selflove, and pride.

And as the thoughts of this sort of persons are, so is their talk; for out of the abundance of their heart their mouth speaketh. As in their high affections they keep their eye upon the beauty of their experiences, and greatness of their attainments; so they are great talkers about themselves.... The true saint, when under great spiritual affections, from

the fulness of his heart, is ready to be speaking much of God, and his glorious perfections and works, and of the beauty and amiableness of Christ, and the glorious things of the gospel: But hypocrites, in their high affections, talk more of the discovery, than they do of the thing discovered; they are full of talk about the great things they have met with, the wonderful discoveries they have had, how sure they are of the love of God to them, how safe their condition is, and how they know they shall go to heaven, &c.

A true saint, when in the enjoyment of true discoveries of the sweet glory of God and Christ, has his mind too much captivated and engaged by what he views without himself, to stand at that time to view himself, and his own attainments: It would be a diversion and loss which he could not bear, to take his eye off from the ravishing object of his contemplation, to survey his own experience, and to spend time in thinking with himself, what an high attainment this is, and what a good story I now have to tell others. Nor does the pleasure and sweetness of his mind at that time chiefly arise from the consideration of the safety of his state, or any thing he has in view of his own qualifications, experiences, or circumstances; but from the divine and supreme beauty of what is the object of his direct view, without himself; which sweetly entertains, and strongly holds his mind.

As the love and joy of hypocrites are all from the source of selflove; so it is with their other affections, their sorrow for sin, their humiliation and submission, their religious desires and zeal: Every thing is, as it were, paid for beforehand, in God's highly gratifying their selflove, and their lusts, by making so much of them, and exalting them so highly, as things are in their imagination. It is easy for nature, as corrupt as it is, under a notion of being already some of the highest favorites of heaven, and having a God who does so protect them and favor them in their sins, to love this imaginary God that suits them so well, and to extol him, and submit to him, and to be fierce and zealous for him. The high affections of many are all built on the supposition of their being eminent saints. If that opinion which they have of them-

selves were taken away, if they thought they were some of the lower form of saints (though they should yet suppose themselves to be real saints) their high affections would fall to the ground. If they only saw a little of the sinfulness and vileness of their own hearts, and their deformity, in the midst of their best duties and their best affections, it would knock their affections on the head; because their affections are built upon self, therefore self knowledge would destroy them. But as to truly gracious affections, they are built elsewhere; they have their foundation out of self in God and Jesus Christ; and therefore a discovery of themselves, of their own deformity, and the meanness of their experiences, though it will purify their affections, yet it will not destroy them, but in some respects sweeten and heighten them.

III. Those affections that are truly holy, are primarily founded on the loveliness of the moral excellency of divine things. Or (to express it otherwise) a love to divine things for the beauty and sweetness of their moral excellency, is the first beginning and spring of all holy affections.

Here, for the sake of the more illiterate reader, I will explain what I mean by the moral excellency of divine things.

And it may be observed, that the word *moral* is not to be understood here, according to the common and vulgar acceptation of the word, when men speak of morality, and a moral behavior; meaning an outward conformity to the duties of the moral law, and especially the duties of the second table; or intending no more at farthest, than such seeming virtues, as proceed from natural principles, in opposition to those virtues that are more inward, spiritual, and divine; as the honesty, justice, generosity, good nature, and public spirit of many of the heathen are called moral virtues, in distinction from the holy faith, love, humility, and heavenly mindedness of true Christians: I say, the word *moral* is not to be understood thus in this place.

But in order to a right understanding what is meant, it must be observed, that divines commonly make a distinction between moral good and evil, and natural good and evil. By moral evil, they mean the evil of sin, or that evil which is

against duty, and contrary to what is right and ought to be. By natural evil, they do not mean that evil which is properly opposed to duty; but that which is contrary to mere nature, without any respect to a rule of duty. So the evil of suffering is called natural evil, such as pain and torment, disgrace, and the like: These things are contrary to mere nature, contrary to the nature of both bad and good, hateful to wicked men and devils, as well as good men and angels. So likewise natural defects are called natural evils, as if a child be monstrous, or a natural fool; these are natural evils, but are not moral evils, because they have not properly the nature of the evil of sin. On the other hand, as by moral evil, divines mean the evil of sin, or that which is contrary to what is right; so by moral good, they mean that which is contrary to sin, or that good in beings who have will and choice, whereby, as voluntary agents, they are, and act, as it becomes them to be and to act, or so as is most fit, and suitable, and lovely. By natural good, they mean that good that is entirely of a different kind from holiness or virtue, viz. that which perfects or suits nature, considering nature abstractly from any holy or unholy qualifications, and without any relation to any rule or measure of right and wrong.

Thus pleasure is a natural good; so is honor, so is strength; so is speculative knowledge, human learning, and policy..... Thus there is a distinction to be made between the natural good that men are possessed of, and their moral good; and also between the natural and moral good of the angels in heaven: The great capacity of their understandings, and their great strength, and the honorable circumstances they are in as the great ministers of God's kingdom, whence they are called thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers, is the natural good which they are possessed of; but their perfect and glorious holiness and goodness, their pure and flaming love to God, and to the saints and to one another, is their moral good. So divines make a distinction between the natural and moral perfections of God: By the moral perfections of God, they mean those attributes which God exercises as a moral agent, or whereby the heart and will of God are good, right and in-

finitely becoming, and lovely; such as his righteousness, truth, faithfulness, and goodness; or, in one word, his holiness. By God's natural attributes or perfections, they mean those attributes, wherein, according to our way of conceiving of God, consists, not the holiness or moral goodness of God, but his greatness; such as his power, his knowledge, whereby he knows all things, and his being eternal, from everlasting to everlasting, his omnipresence, and his awful and terrible majesty.

The moral excellency of an intelligent voluntary being is more immediately seated in the heart or will of moral agents. That intelligent being, whose will is truly right and lovely, is morally good or excellent.

This moral excellency of an intelligent being, when it is true and real, and not only external, or merely seeming and counterfeit, is holiness. Therefore holiness comprehends all the true moral excellency of intelligent beings: There is no other true virtue, but real holiness. Holiness comprehends all the true virtue of a good man, his love to God, his gracious love to men, his justice, his charity, and bowels of mercies, his gracious meekness and gentleness, and all other true Christian virtues that he has, belong to his holiness. So the holiness of God in the more extensive sense of the word, and the sense in which the word is commonly, if not universally used concerning God in scripture, is the same with the moral excellency of the divine nature, or his purity and beauty as a moral agent, comprehending all his moral perfections, his righteousness, faithfulness, and goodness. As in holy men, their charity, Christian kindness and mercy, belong to their holiness; so the kindness and mercy of God belong to his holiness. Holiness in man is but the image of God's holiness: There are not more virtues belonging to the image than are in the original: Derived holiness has not more in it than is in that underived holiness which is its fountain: There is no more than grace for grace, or grace in the image, answerable to grace in the original.

As there are two kinds of attributes in God, according to our way of conceiving of him, his moral attributes, which

are summed up in his holiness, and his natural attributes of strength, knowledge, &c. that constitute the greatness of God; so there is a twofold image of God in man, his moral or spiritual image, which is his holiness, that is the image of God's moral excellency (which image was lost by the fall) and God's natural image, consisting in man's reason and understanding, his natural ability, and dominion over the creatures, which is the image of God's natural attribute.

From what has been said, it may easily be understood what I intend, when I say that a love to divine things for the beauty of their moral excellency, is the beginning and spring of all holy affections. It has been already shewn, under the former head, that the first objective ground of all holy affections is the supreme excellency of divine things as they are in themselves, or in their own nature: I now proceed further, and say more particularly, that that kind of excellency of the nature of divine things, which is the first objective ground of all holy affections, is their moral excellency, or their holiness. Holy persons, in the exercise of holy affections, do love divine things primarily for their holiness: They love God, in the first place, for the beauty of his holiness or moral perfection, as being supremely amiable in itself. Not that the saints, in the exercise of gracious affections, do love God only for his holiness; all his attributes are amiable and glorious in their eyes; they delight in every divine perfection; the contemplation of the infinite greatness, power, and knowledge, and terrible majesty of God, is pleasant to them. But their love to God for his holiness is what is most fundamental and essential in their love. Here it is that true love to God begins; all other holy love to divine things flows from hence: This is the most essential and distinguishing thing that belongs to a holy love to God, with regard to the foundation of it. A love to God for the beauty of his moral attributes, leads to, and necessarily causes a delight in God for all his attributes; for his moral attributes cannot be without his natural attributes: For infinite holiness supposes infinite wisdom, and an infinite capacity and greatness; and all the attributes of God do as it were imply one another.

The true beauty and loveliness of all intelligent beings does primarily and most essentially consist in their moral excellency or holiness. Herein consists the loveliness of the angels, without which, with all their natural perfections, their strength, and their knowledge, they would have no more loveliness than devils. It is a moral excellency alone, that is in itself, and on its own account, the excellency of intelligent beings: It is this that gives beauty to, or rather is the beauty of their natural perfections and qualifications. Moral excellency is the excellency of natural excellencies. Natural qualifications are either excellent or otherwise, according as they are joined with moral excellency or not. Strength and knowledge do not render any being lovely, without holiness, but more hateful; though they render them more lovely, when joined with holiness. Thus the elect angels are the more glorious for their strength and knowledge, because these natural perfections of theirs are sanctified by their moral perfection. But though the devils are very strong, and of great natural understanding, they be not the more lovely: They are more terrible indeed, but not the more amiable; but on the contrary, the more hateful. The holiness of an intelligent creature, is the beauty of all his natural perfections. And so it is in God, according to our way of conceiving of the divine Being: Holiness is in a peculiar manner the beauty of the divine nature. Hence we often read of the beauty of holiness, Psal. xxix. 2, Psal. xcvi. 9, and cx. 3. This renders all his other attributes glorious and lovely. It is the glory of God's wisdom, that it is a holy wisdom, and not a wicked subtilty and craftiness. This makes his majesty lovely; and not merely dreadful and horrible, that it is a holy majesty. It is the glory of God's immutability, that it is a holy immutability, and not an inflexible obstinacy in wickedness.

And therefore it must needs be, that a sight of God's loveliness must begin here. A true love to God must begin with a delight in his holiness, and not with a delight in any other attribute; for no other attribute is truly lovely without this, and no otherwise than as (according to our way of conceiving of God) it derives its loveliness from this; and therefore it is

impossible that other attributes should appear lovely, in their true loveliness, until this is seen; and it is impossible that any perfection of the divine nature should be loved with true love until this is loved. If the true loveliness of all God's perfections arise from the loveliness of his holiness; then the true love of all his perfections arises from the love of his holiness. They that do not see the glory of God's holiness, cannot see any thing of the true glory of his mercy and grace: They see nothing of the glory of those attributes, as any excellency of God's nature, as it is in itself; though they may be affected with them, and love them, as they concern their interest; For these attributes are no part of the excellency of God's nature, as that is excellent in itself, any otherwise than as they are included in his holiness, more largely taken; or as they are a part of his moral perfection.

As the beauty of the divine nature does primarily consist in God's holiness, so does the beauty of all divine things. Herein consists the beauty of the saints, that they are saints, or holy ones; it is the moral image of God in them, which is their beauty; and that is their holiness. Herein consists the beauty and brightness of the angels of heaven, that they are holy angels, and so not devils, Dan. iv. 13, 17, 23, Mat. xxv. 31, Mark viii. 38, Acts x. 22, Rev. xiv. 10. Herein consists the beauty of the Christian religion, above all other religions, that it is so holy a religion. Herein consists the excellency of the word of God, that it is so holy, Psal. cxix. 140. "Thy word is very pure, therefore thy servant loveth it, ver. 128. I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way. Ver. 138. Thy testimonies that thou hast commanded are righteous, and very faithful. And 172. My tongue shall speak of thy word; for all thy commandments are righteousness. And Psal. xix. 7....10. The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever: The judgments of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether: More to be

desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey, and the honey comb." Herein does primarily consist the amiableness and beauty of the Lord Jesus, whereby he is the chief among ten thousands, and altogether lovely, even in that he is the holy one of God, Acts, iii. 14, and God's holy child, Acts iv. 27, and he that is holy, and he that is true, Rev. iii. 7. All the spiritual beauty of his human nature, consisting in his meekness, lowliness, patience, heavenliness, love to God, love to men, condescension to the mean and vile, and compassion to the miserable, &c. all is summed up in his holiness. And the beauty of his divine nature, of which the beauty of his human nature is the image and reflection, does also primarily consist in his holiness. Herein primarily consists the glory of the gospel, that it is a holy gospel, and so bright an emanation of the holy beauty of God and Jesus Christ: Herein consists the spiritual beauty of its doctrines, that they are holy doctrines, or doctrines according to godliness. And herein does consist the spiritual beauty of the way of salvation by Jesus Christ, that it is so holy a way. And herein chiefly consists the glory of heaven, that it is the holy city, the holy Jerusalem, the habitation of God's holiness, and so of his glory, Isa. lxiii. 15. All the beauties of the new Jerusalem, as it is described in the two last chapters of Revelation, are but various representations of this: See chap. xxi. 2, 10, 11, 18, 21, 27....chap. xxii. 1, 3.

And therefore it is primarily on account of this kind of excellency, that the saints do love all these things. Thus they love the word of God, because it is very pure. It is on this account they love the saints; and on this account chiefly it is, that heaven is lovely to them, and those holy tabernacles of God amiable in their eyes: It is on this account that they love God; and on this account primarily it is, that they love Christ, and that their hearts delight in the doctrines of the gospel, and sweetly acquiesce in the way of salvation therein revealed.*

* "To the right closing with Christ's person, this is also required, to taste the bitterness of sin, as the greatest evil; Else a man will never close with

Under the head of the first distinguishing characteristic of gracious affection, I observed, that there is given to those that are regenerated, a new supernatural sense, that is as it were a certain divine spiritual taste, which is, in its whole nature, diverse from any former kinds of sensation of the mind, as tasting is diverse from any of the other five senses, and that something is perceived by a true saint in the exercise of this new sense of mind, in spiritual and divine things, as entirely different from any thing that is perceived in them by natural men, as the sweet taste of honey is diverse from the ideas men get of honey by looking on it or feeling it: Now this that I have been speaking, viz. the beauty of holiness, is that thing in spiritual and divine things, which is perceived by this spiritual sense, that is so diverse from all that natural men perceive in them; this kind of beauty is the quality that is the immediate object of this spiritual sense; this is the sweetness that is the proper object of this spiritual taste. The scripture often represents the beauty and sweetness of holiness as the grand object of a spiritual taste and spiritual appetite. This was the sweet food of the holy soul of Jesus Christ, John iv. 32, 34. "I have meat to eat that ye know not of.....My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." I know of no part of the holy scriptures, where the nature and evidences of true and sincere godliness are so much of set purpose and so fully and largely insisted on and delineated, as the 119th Psalm; the Psalmist declares his design in the first verses of the Psalm, and he keeps his eye on this design all along, and pursues it to the end: But in this Psalm the excellency of holiness is represented as the

Christ, for his holiness in him, and from him, as the greatest good. For we told you, that that is the right closing with Christ for himself, when it is for his holiness. For ask a whorish heart, what beauty he sees in the person of Christ; he will, after he has looked over his kingdom, his righteousness, and all his works, see a beauty in them, because they do serve his turn, to comfort him only. Ask a virgin, he will see his happiness in all; but that which makes the Lord amiable is his holiness, which is in him to make him holy too As in marriage, it is the personal beauty draws the heart. And hence I have thought it reason, that he that loves the brethren for a little grace, will love Christ much more." *Shepard's Parable*, Part I. p. 84.

immediate object of a spiritual taste, relish, appetite, and delight of God's law, that grand expression and emanation of the holiness of God's nature, and prescription of holiness to the creature, is all along represented as the food and entertainment, and as the great object of the love, the appetite, the complacence and rejoicing of the gracious nature, which prizes God's commandments above gold, yea, the finest gold, and to which they are sweeter than the honey and honey comb; and that upon account of their holiness, as I observed before. The same Psalmist declares, that this is the sweetness that a spiritual taste relishes in God's law, Psal. xix. 7, 8, 9, 10. "The law of the Lord is perfect: The commandment of the Lord is pure; the fear of the Lord is clean; the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart;....the judgments of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether; more to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey, and the honey comb."

A holy love has a holy object: The holiness of love consists especially in this, that it is the love of that which is holy, as holy, or for its holiness; so that it is the holiness of the object, which is the quality whereon it fixes and terminates. An holy nature must needs love that in holy things chiefly, which is most agreeable to itself; but surely that in divine things, which above all others is agreeable to a holy nature, is holiness, because holiness must be above all other things agreeable to holiness; for nothing can be more agreeable to any nature than itself; holy nature must be above all things agreeable to holy nature: And so the holy nature of God and Christ, and the word of God, and other divine things, must be above all other things agreeable to the holy nature that is in the saints.

And again, an holy nature doubtless loves holy things, especially on the account of that for which sinful nature has enmity against them: But that for which chiefly sinful nature is at enmity against holy things, is their holiness; it is for this, that the carnal mind is at enmity against God, and against the law of God, and the people of God. Now it is just arguing from contraries; from contrary causes to contrary ef-

fects; from opposite natures to opposite tendencies. We know that holiness is of a directly contrary nature to wickedness; as therefore it is the nature of wickedness chiefly to oppose and hate holiness; so it must be the nature of holiness chiefly to tend to, and delight in holiness.

The holy nature in the saints and angels in heaven (where the true tendency of it best appears) is principally engaged by the holiness of divine things. This is the divine beauty which chiefly engages the attention, admiration, and praise of the bright and burning Seraphim, Isa. vi. 3. "One cried unto another, and said, Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory. And Rev. iv. 8. They rest not day and night, saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. So the glorified saints, chap. xv. 4. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? For thou only art holy."

And the scriptures represent the saints on earth as adoring God primarily on this account, and admiring and extolling all God's attributes, either as deriving loveliness, from his holiness, or as being a part of it. Thus when they praise God for his power, his holiness is the beauty that engages them, Psal. xcviii. 1. "O sing unto the Lord a new song, for he hath done marvellous things: His right hand, and his holy arm hath gotten him the victory." So when they praise him for his justice and terrible majesty, Psal. xcix. 2, 3. "The Lord is great in Zion, and he is high above all people. Let them praise thy great and terrible name; for it is holy, ver. 5. Exalt ye the Lord our God, and worship at his footstool; for he is holy, ver. 8, 9. Thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest vengeance of their inventions. Exalt ye the Lord our God, and worship at his holy hill: For the Lord our God is holy." So when they praise God for his mercy and faithfulness, Psal. xcvii. 11, 12. "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart. Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous; and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness, 1 Sam. ii. 2. There is none holy as the Lord: For there is none besides thee; neither is there any rock like our God."

By this therefore all may try their affections, and particularly their love and joy. Various kinds of creatures shew the difference of their natures, very much in the different things they relish as their proper good, one delighting in that which another abhors. Such a difference is there between true saints, and natural men: Natural men have no sense of the goodness and excellency of holy things, at least for their holiness; they have no taste for that kind of good; and so may be said not to know that divine good, or not to see it; it is wholly hid from them; but the saints, by the mighty power of God, have it discovered to them; they have that supernatural, most noble and divine sense given them, by which they perceive it; and it is this that captivates their hearts, and delights them above all things; it is the most amiable and sweet thing to the heart of a true saint, that is to be found in heaven or earth; that which above all others attracts and engages his soul; and that wherein, above all things, he places his happiness, and which he lots upon for solace and entertainment to his mind, in this world, and full satisfaction and blessedness in another. By this, you may examine your love to God, and to Jesus Christ, and to the word of God, and your joy in them, and also your love to the people of God, and your desires after heaven; whether they be from a supreme delight in this sort of beauty, without being primarily moved from your imagined interest in them, or expectations from them. There are many high affections, great seeming love and rapturous joys, which have nothing of this holy relish belonging to them.

Particularly, by what has been said you may try your discoveries of the glory of God's grace and love, and your affections arising from them. The grace of God may appear lovely two ways; either as *bonum utile*, a profitable good to me, that which greatly serves my interest, and so suits my selflove; or as *bonum formosum*, a beautiful good in itself, and part of the moral and spiritual excellency of the divine nature. In this latter respect it is that the true saints have their hearts affected, and love captivated by the free grace of God in the first place.

From the things that have been said, it appears, that if persons have a great sense of the natural perfections of God, and are greatly affected with them, or have any other sight or sense of God than that which consists in, or implies a sense of the beauty of his moral perfections, it is no certain sign of grace; as particularly men's having a great sense of the awful greatness and terrible majesty of God; for this is only God's natural perfection, and what men may see, and yet be entirely blind to the beauty of his moral perfection, and have nothing of that spiritual taste which relishes this divine sweetness.

It has been shown already, in what was said upon the first distinguishing mark of gracious affections, that that which is spiritual, is entirely different in its nature, from all that it is possible any graceless person should be the subject of, while he continues graceless. But it is possible that those who are wholly without grace should have a clear sight and very great and affecting sense of God's greatness, his mighty power, and awful majesty; for this is what the devils have, though they have lost the spiritual knowledge of God, consisting in a sense of the amiableness of his moral perfections; they are perfectly destitute of any sense or relish of that kind of beauty, yet they have a very great knowledge of the natural glory of God (if I may so speak) or his awful greatness and majesty; this they behold, and are affected with the apprehensions of, and therefore tremble before him. This glory of God all shall behold at the day of judgment; God will make all rational beings to behold it to a great degree indeed, angels and devils, saints and sinners: Christ will manifest his infinite greatness, and awful majesty, to every one, in a most open, clear, and convincing manner, and in a light that none can resist, "when he shall come in the glory of his Father, and every eye shall see him;" when they shall cry to the mountains to fall upon them, to hide them from the face of him that sits upon the throne, they are represented as seeing the glory of God's majesty, Isa. ii. 10, 19, 21. God will make all his enemies to behold this, and to live in a most clear and affecting view of it, in hell, to all eternity. God

hath often declared his immutable purpose to make all his enemies to know him in this respect, in so often annexing these words to the threatenings he denounces against them. "And they shall know that I am the Lord;" yea, he hath sworn that all men shall see his glory in this respect, Numb. xiv. 31. "As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord." And this kind of manifestation of God is very often spoken of in scripture, as made, or to be made, in the sight of God's enemies in this world, Exod. ix. 16. and chap. xiv. 18, and xv. 16. Psal. lxvi. 3, and xlvi. 10, and other places innumerable. This was a manifestation which God made of himself in the sight of that wicked congregation at mount Sinai; deeply affecting them with it; so that all the people in the camp trembled. Wicked men and devils will see, and have a great sense of every thing that appertains to the glory of God, but only the beauty of his moral perfection, they will see his infinite greatness and majesty, his infinite power, and will be fully convinced of his omniscience, and his eternity and immutability; and they will see and know every thing appertaining to his moral attributes themselves, but only the beauty and amiableness of them; they will see and know that he is perfectly just, and righteous, and true, and that he is a holy God, of purer eyes than to behold evil, who cannot look on iniquity; and they will see the wonderful manifestations of his infinite goodness and free grace to the saints; and there is nothing will be hid from their eyes, but only the beauty of these moral attributes, and that beauty of the other attributes, which arises from it. And so natural men in this world are capable of having a very affecting sense of every thing else that appertains to God, but this only. Nebuchadnezzar had a great and very affecting sense of the infinite greatness and awful majesty of God, of his supreme and absolute dominion, and mighty and irresistible power, and of his sovereignty, and that he, and all the inhabitants of the earth were nothing before him; and also had a great conviction in his conscience of his justice, and an affecting sense of his great goodness, Dan. iv. 1, 2, 3, 34, 35, 37. And the sense that Darius had of God's perfections,

seems to be very much like his, Dan. vi. 25, &c. But the saints and angels do behold the glory of God consisting in the beauty of his holiness; and it is this sight only that will melt and humble the hearts of men, and wean them from the world, and draw them to God, and effectually change them. A sight of the awful greatness of God, may overpower men's strength, and be more than they can endure; but if the moral beauty of God be hid, the enmity of the heart will remain in its full strength, no love will be enkindled, all will not be effectual to gain the will, but that will remain inflexible; whereas the first glimpse of the moral and spiritual glory of God shining into the heart, produces all these effects as it were with omnipotent power, which nothing can withstand.

The sense that natural men may have of the awful greatness of God may affect them various ways; it may not only terrify them, but it may elevate them, and raise their joy and praise, as their circumstances may be. This will be the natural effectof it, under the real or supposed receipt of some extraordinary mercy from God, by the influence of mere principles of nature. It has been shown already, that the receipt of kindness may, by the influence of natural principles, affect the heart with gratitude and praise to God; but if a person, at the same time that he receives remarkable kindness from God, has a sense of his infinite greatness, and that he is but nothing in comparison of him, surely this will naturally raise his gratitude and praise the higher, for kindness to one so much inferior. A sense of God's greatness had this effect upon Nebuchadnezzar, under the receipt of that extraordinary favor of his restoration, after he had been driven from men, and had his dwelling with the beasts: A sense of God's exceeding greatness raises his gratitude very high; so that he does, in the most lofty terms, extol and magnify God, and calls upon all the world to do it with him; and much more if a natural man, at the same time that he is greatly affected with God's infinite greatness and majesty, entertains a strong conceit that this great God has made him his child and special favorite, and promised him eternal glory in his highest

love, will this have a tendency, according to the course of nature, to raise his joy and praise to a great height.

Therefore, it is beyond doubt that too much weight has been laid, by many persons of late, on discoveries of God's greatness, awful majesty, and natural perfection, operating after this manner, without any real view of the holy majesty of God. And experience does abundantly witness to what reason and scripture declare as to this matter; there having been very many persons, who have seemed to be overpowered with the greatness and majesty of God, and consequently elevated in the manner that has been spoken of, who have been very far from having appearances of a Christian spirit and temper, in any manner of proportion, or fruits in practice in any wise agreeable; but their discoveries have worked in a way contrary to the operation of truly spiritual discoveries.

Not that a sense of God's greatness and natural attributes is not exceeding useful and necessary. For, as I observed before, this is implied in a manifestation of the beauty of God's holiness. Though that be something beyond it, it supposes it, as the greater supposes the less. And though natural men may have a sense of the natural perfections of God; yet undoubtedly this is more frequent and common with the saints than with natural men; and grace tends to enable men to see these things in a better manner than natural men do; and not only enables them to see God's natural attributes, but that beauty of those attributes, which (according to our way of conceiving of God) is derived from his holiness.

IV. Gracious affections do arise from the mind's being enlightened, richly and spiritually to understand or apprehend divine things.

Holy affections are not heat without light; but evermore arise from the information of the understanding, some spiritual instruction that the mind receives, some light or actual knowledge. The child of God is graciously affected, because he sees and understands something more of divine things than he did before, more of God or Christ, and of the glorious things exhibited in the gospel; he has some clearer and better view than he had before, when he was not affected;

Either he receives some understanding of divine things that is new to him; or has his former knowledge renewed after the view was decayed, 1 John iv. 7. "Every one that loveth, knoweth God. Phil. i. 9. I pray that your love may abound more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment. Rom. x. 2. They have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. Col. iii. 10. The new man, which is renewed in knowledge. Psalm. xliii. 3, 4. O send out thy light and thy truth; let them lead me, let them bring me unto thy holy hill. John vi. 45. It is written in the prophets, and they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and learned of the Father, cometh unto me." Knowledge is the key that first opens the hard heart, and enlarges the affections, and so opens the way for men into the kingdom of heaven, Luke xi. 52. "Ye have taken away the key of knowledge."

Now there are many affections which do not arise from any light in the understanding. And when it is thus, it is a sure evidence that these affections are not spiritual, let them be ever so high.* Indeed they have some new apprehensions which they had not before. Such is the nature of man, that it is impossible his mind should be affected, unless it be by something that he apprehends, or that his mind conceives of. But in many persons those apprehensions or conceptions that they have, wherewith they are affected, have nothing of the nature of knowledge or instruction in them. As for instance, when a person is affected with a lively idea, suddenly excited in his mind, of some shape or very beautiful pleasant form of countenance, or some shining light, or other glorious outward appearance: Here is something apprehended or conceived by the mind; but there is nothing of the nature of instruction in it; persons become never the wiser by such

* "Many that have had mighty strong affections at first conversion, afterwards become dry, and wither, and consume, and pine, and die away: And now their hypocrisy is manifest; if not to all the world by open profaneness, yet to the discerning eye of living Christians, by a formal, barren, unsavory, unfruitful heart and course; because they never had light to conviction enough as yet.

things, or more knowing about God, or a Mediator between God and man, or the way of salvation by Christ, or any thing contained in any of the doctrines of the gospel. Persons by these external ideas have no further acquaintance with God, as to any of the attributes or perfections of his nature; nor have they any further understanding of his word, or any of his ways or works. Truly spiritual and gracious affections are not raised after this manner; these arise from the enlightening of the understanding to understand the things that are taught of God and Christ, in a new manner, the coming to a new understanding of the excellent nature of God, and his wonderful perfections, some new view of Christ in his spiritual excellencies and fulness, or things opened to him in a new manner, that appertain to the way of salvation by Christ, whereby he now sees how it is, and understands those divine and spiritual doctrines which once were foolishness to him. Such enlightenings of the understanding as these, are things entirely different in their nature from strong ideas of shapes and colors, and outward brightness and glory, or sounds and voices. That all gracious affections do arise from some instruction or enlightening of the understanding, is therefore a further proof, that affections which arise from such impression on the imagination, are not gracious affections, besides the things observed before, which make this evident.

Hence also it appears, that affections arising from texts of scripture coming to the mind are vain, when no instruction received in the understanding from those texts, or any thing taught in those texts, is the ground of the affection, but the manner of their coming to the mind. When Christ makes the scripture a means of the heart's burning with gracious affection, it is "by opening the scriptures to their understandings, Luke xxiv. 32. Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?" It appears also that the affection which is occasioned by the coming of a text of scripture must be vain, when the affection is founded on something that is supposed to be taught by it, which really is not contained in it,

nor in an other scripture; because such supposed instruction is not real instruction, but a mistake and misapprehension of the mind. As for instance, when persons suppose that they are expressly taught by some scripture coming to their minds, that they in particular are beloved of God, or that their sins are forgiven, that God is their Father, and the like, this is a mistake or misapprehension; for the scripture no where reveals the individual persons who are beloved, expressly; but only by consequence, by revealing the qualifications of persons that are beloved of God: And therefore this matter is not to be learned from scripture any other way than by consequence, and from these qualifications; for things are not to be learned from the scripture any other way than they are taught in the scripture.

Affections really arise from ignorance, rather than instruction, in these instances which have been mentioned; as likewise in some others that might be mentioned. As some, when they find themselves free of speech in prayer, they call it God's being with them; and this affects them more; and so their affections are set a going and increased; when they look not into the cause of this freedom of speech, which may arise many other ways besides God's spiritual presence. So some are much affected with some apt thoughts that come into their minds about the scripture, and call it the Spirit of God teaching them. So they ascribe many of the workings of their own minds, which they have a high opinion of, and are pleased and taken with, to the special immediate influences of God's Spirit; and so are mightily affected with their privilege. And there are some instances of persons, in whom it seems manifest, that the first ground of their affection is some bodily sensation. The animal spirits, by some cause (and probably sometimes by the devil) are suddenly and unaccountably put into a very agreeable motion, causing persons to feel pleasantly in their bodies; the animal spirits are put into such a motion as is wont to be connected with the exhilaration of the mind; and the soul, by the laws of the union of soul and body, hence feels pleasure. The motion of the animal spirits does not first arise from any affection or

apprehension of the mind whatsoever; but the very first thing that is felt, is an exhilaration of the animal spirits, and a pleasant external sensation it may be in their breasts. Hence through ignorance, the person being surprised, begins to think, surely this is the Holy Ghost coming into him. And then the mind begins to be affected and raised: There is first great joy; and then many other affections, in a very tumultuous manner, putting all nature, both body and mind, into a mighty ruffle. For though, as I observed before, it is the soul only that is the seat of the affections; yet this hinders not but that bodily sensations may, in this manner, be an occasion of affections in the mind.

And if men's religious affections do truly arise from some instruction or light in the understanding; yet the affection is not gracious, unless the light which is the ground of it be spiritual. Affections may be excited by that understanding of things, which they obtain merely by human teaching, with the common improvement of the faculties of the mind. Men may be much affected by knowledge of things of religion that they obtain this way; as some philosophers have been mightily affected, and almost carried beyond themselves, by the discoveries they have made in mathematics and natural philosophy. So men may be much affected from common illuminations of the Spirit of God, in which God assists men's faculties to a greater degree of that kind of understanding of religious matters, which they have in some degree, by only the ordinary exercise and improvement of their own faculties. Such illuminations may much affect the mind; as in many whom we read of in scripture, that were once enlightened; but these affections are not spiritual.

There is such a thing, if the scriptures are of any use to teach us any thing, as a spiritual, supernatural understanding of divine things, that is peculiar to the saints, and which those who are not saints have nothing of. It is certainly a kind of understanding, apprehending or discerning of divine things, that natural men have nothing of, which the apostle speaks of, 1 Cor. ii. 14. "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; nei-

ther can be know them, because they are spiritually discerned." It is certainly a kind of seeing or discerning spiritual things peculiar to the saints, which is spoken of, 1 John iii. 6. "Whosoever sinneth, hath not seen him, neither known him, 3 John 11. He that doth evil, hath not seen God. And John vi. 40. This is the will of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life. Chap. xiv. 19. The world seeth me no more; but ye see me. Chap. xvii. 3. This is eternal life, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. Mat. 11, 27. No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. John xii. 45. He that seeth me, seeth him that sent me. Psal. ix. 10. They that know thy name, will put their trust in thee. Phil. iii. 8. I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord :.....ver. 10. That I may know him." And innumerable other places there are, all over the Bible, which shew the same. And that there is such a thing as an understanding of divine things, which in its nature and kind is wholly different from all knowledge that natural men have, is evident from this, that there is an understanding of divine things, which the scripture calls spiritual understanding, Col. i. 9. "We do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding." It has been already shown, that that which is spiritual, in the ordinary use of the word in the New Testament, is entirely different in nature and kind, from all which natural men are, or can be the subjects of.

From hence it may be surely inferred wherein spiritual understanding consists. For if there be in the saints a kind of apprehension or perception, which is in its nature perfectly diverse from all that natural men have, or that it is possible they should have, until they have a new nature; it must consist in their having a certain kind of ideas or sensations of mind, which are simply diverse from all that is or can be in the minds of natural men. And that is the same thing as to

say, that it consists in the sensations of a new spiritual sense, which the souls of natural men have not; as is evident by what has been before, once and again observed. But I have already shown what that new spiritual sense is which the saints have given them in regeneration, and what is the object of it. I have shown that the immediate object of it is the supreme beauty and excellency of the nature of divine things, as they are in themselves. And this is agreeable to the scripture; the apostle very plainly teaches, that the great thing discovered by spiritual light, and understood by spiritual knowledge, is the glory of divine things, 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them; together with ver. 6. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ." And chap. iii. 18, preceding. But we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." And it must needs be so, for, as has been before observed, the scripture often teaches, that all true religion summarily consists in the love of divine things. And therefore that kind of understanding or knowledge, which is the proper foundation of true religion, must be the knowledge of the loveliness of divine things. For doubtless, that knowledge which is the proper foundation of love, is the knowledge of loveliness. What that beauty of divine things is, which is the proper and immediate object of a spiritual sense of mind, was shewed under the last head insisted on, viz. that it is the beauty of their moral perfection. Therefore it is in the view or sense of this, that spiritual understanding does more immediately and primarily consist. And indeed it is plain it can be nothing else; for (as has been shown) there is nothing pertaining to divine things, besides the beauty of their moral excellency, and those properties and qualities of divine things which this beauty is the foundation of, but what natural

men and devils can see and know, and will know fully and clearly to all eternity.

From what has been said, therefore, we come necessarily to this conclusion, concerning that wherein spiritual understanding consists, viz. that it consists in "a sense of the heart, of the supreme beauty and sweetness of the holiness or moral perfection of divine things, together with all that discerning and knowledge of things of religion, that depends upon, and flows from such a sense."

Spiritual understanding consists primarily in a sense of heart of that spiritual beauty. I say, a sense of heart; for it is not speculation merely that is concerned in this kind of understanding; nor can there be a clear distinction made between the two faculties of understanding and will, as acting distinctly and separately, in this matter. When the mind is sensible of the sweet beauty and amiableness of a thing, that implies a sensibleness of sweetness and delight in the presence of the idea of it: And this sensibleness of the amiableness or delightfulness of beauty, carries in the very nature of it the sense of the heart; or an effect and impression the soul is the subject of, as a substance possessed of taste, inclination and will.

There is a distinction to be made between a mere notional understanding, wherein the mind only beholds things in the exercise of a speculative faculty; and the sense of the heart, wherein the mind does not only speculate and behold, but relishes and feels. That sort of knowledge, by which a man has a sensible perception of amiableness and loathsomeness, or of sweetness and nauseousness, is not just the same sort of knowledge with that by which he knows what a triangle is, and what a square is. The one is mere speculative knowledge, the other sensible knowledge, in which more than the mere intellect is concerned; the heart is the proper subject of it, or the soul as a being that not only beholds, but has inclination, and is pleased or displeased. And yet there is the nature of instruction in it; as he that has perceived the sweet taste of honey, knows much more about it, than he who has only looked upon, and felt of it.

The apostle seems to make a distinction between mere speculative knowledge of the things of religion, and spiritual knowledge, in calling that "the form of knowledge, and of the truth in the law, Rom. ii. 20. Which hath the form of knowledge, and of the truth in the law." The latter is often represented by relishing, smelling, or tasting, 2 Cor. ii. 14. "Now thanks be to God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ Jesus, and maketh manifest the savor of his knowledge in every place. Mat. xvi. 23. Thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those things that be of men. 1 Pet. ii. 2, 3. As new born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby; if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. Cant. i. 3. Because of the savor of thy good ointments, thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee; compared with 1 John ii. 20. But ye have an unction from the holy one, and ye know all things."

Spiritual understanding primarily consists in this sense, or taste of the moral beauty of divine things; so that no knowledge can be called spiritual, any further than it arises from this, and has this in it. But secondarily it includes all that discerning and knowledge of things of religion, which depend upon and flow from such a sense.

When the true beauty and amiableness of the holiness or true moral good that is in divine things is discovered to the soul, it as it were opens a new world to its views. This shews the glory of all the perfections of God, and of every thing appertaining to the divine Being. For, as was observed before, the beauty of all arises from God's moral perfection. This shews the glory of all God's works, both of creation and providence. For it is the special glory of them, that God's holiness, righteousness, faithfulness, and goodness, are so manifested in them; and without these moral perfections, there would be no glory in that power and skill with which they are wrought. The glorifying of God's moral perfections, is the special end of all the works of God's hands. By this sense of the moral beauty of divine things, is understood the sufficiency of Christ as a mediator; for it is only by the discovery of the beauty of the moral perfection of Christ, that the

believer is let into the knowledge of the excellency of his person, so as to know any thing more of it than the devils do; and it is only by the knowledge of the excellency of Christ's person, that any know his sufficiency as a mediator; for the latter depends upon, and arises from the former. It is by seeing the excellency of Christ's person, that the saints are made sensible of the preciousness of his blood, and its sufficiency to atone for sin; for therein consists the preciousness of Christ's blood, that it is the blood of so excellent and amiable a person. And on this depends the meritoriousness of his obedience, and sufficiency and prevalence of his intercession. By this sight of the moral beauty of divine things, is seen the beauty of the way of salvation by Christ; for that consists in the beauty of the moral perfections of God, which wonderfully shines forth in every step of this method of salvation, from beginning to end. By this is seen the fitness and suitableness of this way; for this wholly consists in its tendency to deliver us from sin and hell, and to bring us to the happiness which consists in the possession and enjoyment of moral good, in a way sweetly agreeing with God's moral perfections. And in the way's being contrived so as to attain these ends, consists the excellent wisdom of that way. By this is seen the excellency of the word of God. Take away all the moral beauty and sweetness in the word, and the Bible is left wholly a dead letter, a dry, lifeless, tasteless thing. By this is seen the true foundation of our duty, the worthiness of God to be so esteemed, honored, loved, submitted to, and served, as he requires of us, and the amiableness of the duties themselves that are required of us. And by this is seen the true evil of sin; for he who sees the beauty of holiness, must necessarily see the hatefulness of sin, its contrary. By this men understand the true glory of heaven, which consists in the beauty and happiness that is in holiness. By this is seen the amiableness and happiness of both saints and angels. He that sees the beauty of holiness, or true moral good, sees the greatest and most important thing in the world, which is the fulness of all things, without which all the world is empty, no better than nothing, yea, worse than nothing. Unless this is seen,

nothing is seen that is worth the seeing; for there is no other true excellency or beauty. Unless this be understood, nothing is understood that is worthy of the exercise of the noble faculty of understanding. This is the beauty of the Godhead, and the divinity of divinity (if I may so speak) the good of the infinite fountain of good; without which, God himself (if that were possible to be) would be an infinite evil; without which, we ourselves had better never have been; and without which there had better have been no being. He therefore in effect knows nothing, that knows not this; his knowledge is but the shadow of knowledge, or the form of knowledge, as the apostle calls it. Well therefore may the scriptures represent those who are destitute of that spiritual sense, by which is perceived the beauty of holiness, as totally blind, deaf, and senseless, yea, dead. And well may regeneration, in which this divine sense is given to the soul by its Creator, be represented as opening the blind eyes, and raising the dead, and bringing a person into a new world. For if what has been said be considered, it will be manifest, that when a person has this sense and knowledge given him, he will view nothing as he did before; though before he knew all things "after the flesh, yet henceforth he will know them so no more; and he is become a new creature; old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new;" agreeable to 2 Cor. v. 16, 17.

And besides the things that have been already mentioned, there arises from this sense of spiritual beauty, all true experimental knowledge of religion, which is of itself as it were a new world of knowledge. He that sees not the beauty of holiness, knows not what one of the graces of God's Spirit is, he is destitute of any idea or conception of all gracious exercises of soul, and all holy comforts and delights, and all effects of the saving influences of the Spirit of God on the heart; and so is ignorant of the greatest works of God, the most important and glorious effects of his power upon the creature; and also is wholly ignorant of the saints as saints, he knows not what they are; and in effect is ignorant of the whole spiritual world.

Things being thus, it plainly appears, that God's implanting that spiritual supernatural sense which has been spoken of, makes a great change in a man. And were it not for the very imperfect degree, in which this sense is commonly given at first, or the small degree of this glorious light, that first dawns upon the soul; the change made by this spiritual opening of the eyes in conversion, would be much greater, and more remarkable every way, than if a man, who had been born blind, and with only the other four senses, should continue so long a time, and then at once should have the sense of seeing imparted to him, in the midst of the clear light of the sun, discovering a world of visible objects. For though sight be more noble than any of the other external senses, yet this spiritual sense which has been spoken of, is infinitely more noble than that, or any other principle of discerning that a man naturally has, and the object of this sense infinitely greater and more important.

This sort of understanding or knowledge, is that knowledge of divine things from whence all truly gracious affections do proceed; by which therefore all affections are to be tried. Those affections that arise wholly from any other kind of knowledge, or do result from any other kind of apprehensions of mind, are vain.

From what has been said, may be learned wherein the most essential difference lies between that light or understanding which is given by the common influences of the Spirit of God, on the hearts of natural men, and that saving instruction which is given to the saints. The latter primarily and most essentially lies in beholding the holy beauty that is in divine things; which is the only true moral good, and which the soul of fallen man is by nature totally blind to. The former consists only in a further understanding, through the assistance of natural principles, of those things which men may know, in some measure, by the alone ordinary exercise of their faculties. And this knowledge consists only in the knowledge of those things pertaining to religion, which are natural. Thus for instance, in those awakenings and convictions of conscience, that natural men are often subject to, the

Spirit of God gives no knowledge of the true moral beauty which is in divine things; but only assists the mind to a clearer idea of the guilt of sin, or its relation to punishment, and connexion with the evil of suffering (without any sight of its moral evil, or odiousness as sin) and a clearer idea of the natural perfections of God, wherein consists, not his holy beauty and glory, but his awful and terrible greatness. It is a clear sight of this, that will fully awaken the consciences of wicked men at the day of judgment, without any spiritual light. And it is a less degree of the same that awakens the consciences of natural men, without spiritual light in this world. The same discoveries are in some measure given in the conscience of an awakened sinner in this world, which will be given more fully, in the consciences of sinners at the day of judgment. The same kind of sight or apprehension of God, in a less degree, makes awakened sinners in this world sensible of the dreadful guilt of sin, against so great and terrible a God, and sensible of its amazing punishment, and fills them with fearful apprehensions of divine wrath, that will thoroughly convince all wicked men, of the infinitely dreadful nature and guilt of sin, and astonish them with apprehensions of wrath, when Christ shall come in the glory of his power and majesty, and every eye shall see him, and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. And in those common illuminations which are sometimes given to natural men, exciting in them some kind of religious desire, love, and joy, the mind is only assisted to a clearer apprehension of the natural good that is in divine things. Thus sometimes, under common illuminations, men are raised with the ideas of the natural good that is in heaven; as its outward glory, its ease, its honor and advancement, a being there the object of the high favor of God, and the great respect of men, and angels, &c. So there are many things exhibited in the gospel concerning God and Christ, and the way of salvation, that have a natural good in them, which suits the natural principle of selflove. Thus in that great goodness of God to sinners, and the wonderful dying love of Christ, there is a natural good which all men love, as they love them-

selves ; as well as a spiritual and holy beauty, which is seen only by the regenerate. Therefore there are many things appertaining to the word of God's grace delivered in the gospel, which may cause natural men, when they hear it, anon with joy to receive it. All that love which natural men have to God and Christ, and Christian virtues, and good men, is not from any sight of the amiableness of the holiness, or true moral excellency of these things ; but only for the sake of the natural good there is in them. All natural men's hatred of sin, is as much from principles of nature, as men's hatred of a tyger for his rapaciousness, or their aversion to a serpent for his poison and hurtfulness ; and all their love of Christian virtue, is from no higher principle, than their love of a man's good nature, which appears amiable to natural men ; but no otherwise than silver and gold appears amiable in the eyes of a merchant, or than the blackness of the soil is beautiful in the eyes of the farmer.

From what has been said of the nature of spiritual understanding, it appears that spiritual understanding does not consist in any new doctrinal knowledge, or in having suggested to the mind any new proposition, not before read or heard of ; for it is plain that this suggesting of new propositions, is a thing entirely diverse from giving the mind a new taste or relish of beauty and sweetness.* It is also evident, that spiritual knowledge does not consist in any new doctrinal explanation of any part of the scripture ; for still, this is but doctrinal knowledge, or the knowledge of propositions ; the doctrinal explaining of any part of scripture, is only giving us to understand what are the propositions contained or taught in that part of scripture.

* Calvin, in his Institutions, Book I. Chap. ix. § 1, says, " It is not the office of the Spirit that is promised us, to make new and before unheard of revelations, or to coin some new kind of doctrine, which tends to draw us away from the received doctrine of the gospel ; but to seal and confirm to us that very doctrine which is by the gospel." And in the same place he speaks of some, that in those days maintained the contrary notion, " pretending to be immediately led by the Spirit, as persons that were governed by a most haughty self conceit : And not so properly to be looked upon as only laboring under a mistake, as driven by a sort of raving madness.

Hence it appears, that the spiritual understanding of the scripture, does not consist in opening to the mind the mystical meaning of the scripture, in its parables, types, and allegories; for this is only a doctrinal explication of the scripture. He that explains what is meant by the stony ground, and the seed's springing up suddenly, and quickly withering away, only explains what propositions or doctrines are taught in it. So he that explains what is typified by Jacob's ladder, and the angels of God ascending and descending on it, or what was typified by Joshua's leading Israel through Jordan, only shews what propositions are hid in these passages. And many men can explain these types, who have no spiritual knowledge. It is possible that a man might know how to interpret all the types, parables, enigmas, and allegories in the Bible, and not have one beam of spiritual light in his mind; because he may not have the least degree of that spiritual sense of the holy beauty of divine things which has been spoken of, and may see nothing of this kind of glory in any thing contained in any of these mysteries, or any other part of the scripture. It is plain, by what the apostle says, that a man might understand all such mysteries, and have no saving grace, 1 Cor. xiii. 2. "And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." They therefore are very foolish, who are exalted in an opinion of their own spiritual attainments, from notions that come into their minds, of the mystical meaning of these and those passages of scripture, as though it was a spiritual understanding of these passages, immediately given them by the Spirit of God, and hence have their affections highly raised; and what has been said, shews the vanity of such affections.

From what has been said, it is also evident, that it is not spiritual knowledge for persons to be informed of their duty, by having it immediately suggested to their minds, that such and such outward actions or deeds are the will of God. If we suppose that it is truly God's manner thus to signify his will to his people, by immediate inward suggestions, such suggestions have nothing of the nature of spiritual light. Such

kind of knowledge would only be one kind of doctrinal knowledge; a proposition concerning the will of God, is as properly a doctrine of religion, as a proposition concerning the nature of God, or a work of God; and an having either of these kinds of propositions, or any other proposition, declared to a man, either by speech, or inward suggestion, differs vastly from an having the holy beauty of divine things manifested to the soul, wherein spiritual knowledge does most essentially consist. Thus there was no spiritual light in Balaam; though he had the will of God immediately suggested to him by the Spirit of God from time to time, concerning the way that he should go, and what he should do and say.

It is manifest therefore, that a being led and directed in this manner, is not that holy and spiritual leading of the Spirit of God, which is peculiar to the saints, and a distinguishing mark of the sons of God, spoken of, Rom. viii. 14. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, are the sons of God; Gal. v. 18. "But if ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law."

And if persons have the will of God concerning their actions, suggested to them by some text of scripture, suddenly and extraordinarily brought to their minds, which text, as the words lay in the Bible before they came to their minds, related to the action and behavior of some other person, but they suppose, as God sent the words to them, he intended something further by them, and meant such a particular action of theirs; I say, if persons should have the will of God thus suggested to them with texts of scripture, it alters not the case. The suggestion being accompanied with an apt text of scripture, does not make the suggestion to be of the nature of spiritual instruction. As for instance, if a person in Newengland, on some occasion, were at a loss whether it was his duty to go into some popish or heathenish land, where he was like to be exposed to many difficulties and dangers, and should pray to God that he would show him the way of his duty; and after earnest prayer, should have those words which God spake to Jacob, Gen. xlvi. suddenly and extraordinarily

brought to his mind, as if they were spoken to him; "Fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will go with thee; and I will also surely bring thee up again." In which words, though as they lay in the Bible before they came to his mind, they related only to Jacob, and his behavior; yet he supposes that God has a further meaning, as they were brought and applied to him; that thus they are to be understood in a new sense, that by Egypt is to be understood this particular country he has in his mind, and that the action intended is his going thither, and that the meaning of the promise is, that God would bring him back into Newengland again. There is nothing of the nature of a spiritual or gracious leading of the Spirit in this; for there is nothing of the nature of spiritual understanding in it. Thus to understand texts of scripture, is not to have a spiritual understanding of them. Spiritually to understand the scripture, is rightly to understand what is in the scripture, and what was in it before it was understood: It is to understand rightly, what used to be contained in the meaning of it, and not the making of a new meaning. When the mind is enlightened spiritually and rightly to understand the scripture, it is enabled to see that in the scripture, which before was not seen by reason of blindness. But if it was by reason of blindness, that is an evidence that the same meaning was in it before, otherwise it would have been no blindness not to see it; it is no blindness not to see a meaning which is not there. Spiritually enlightening the eyes to understand the scripture, is to open the eyes, Psal. cxix. 18. "Open thou mine eyes that I may behold wonderous things out of thy law;" which argues that the reason why the same was not seen in the scripture before, was that the eyes were shut; which would not be the case, if the meaning that is now understood was not there before, but is now newly added to the scripture, by the manner of the scripture's coming to my mind. This making a new meaning to the scripture, is the same thing as making a new scripture; it is properly adding to the word, which is threatened with so dreadful a curse. Spiritually to understand the scripture, is to have the eyes of the mind opened, to behold the wonderful spiritual

excellency of the glorious things contained in the true meaning of it, and that always were contained in it, ever since it was written ; to behold the amiable and bright manifestations of the divine perfections, and of the excellency and sufficiency of Christ, and the excellency and suitableness of the way of salvation by Christ, and the spiritual glory of the precepts and promises of the scripture, &c. which things are, and always were in the Bible, and would have been seen before, if it had not been for blindness, without having any new sense added, by the words being sent by God to a particular person, and spoken anew to him, with a new meaning.

And as to a gracious leading of the Spirit, it consists in two things : Partly in instructing a person in his duty by the Spirit, and partly in powerfully inducing him to comply with that instruction. But so far as the gracious leading of the Spirit lies in instruction, it consists in a person's being guided by a spiritual and distinguishing taste of that which has in it true moral beauty. I have shewn that spiritual knowledge primarily consists in a taste or relish of the amiableness and beauty of that which is truly good and holy : This holy relish is a thing that discerns and distinguishes between good and evil, between holy and unholy, without being at the trouble of a train of reasoning. As he who has a true relish of external beauty, knows what is beautiful by looking upon it ; he stands in no need of a train of reasoning about the proportion of the features, in order to determine whether that which he sees be a beautiful countenance or no ; he needs nothing, but only the glance of his eye. He who has a rectified musical ear, knows whether the sound he hears be true harmony ; he does not need first to be at the trouble of the reasonings of a mathematician about the proportion of the notes. He that has a rectified palate knows what is good food, as soon as he tastes it, whithout the reasoning of a physician about it. There is a holy beauty and sweetness in words and actions, as well as a natural beauty in countenances and sounds, and sweetness in food, Job xii. 11. " Doth not the ear try words, and the mouth taste his meat ?" When a holy and amiable action is suggested to the thoughts of a holy soul, that soul,

if in the lively exercise of its spiritual taste, at once sees a beauty in it, and so inclines to it, and closes with it. On the contrary, if an unworthy, unholy action be suggested to it, its sanctified eye sees no beauty in it, and is not pleased with it; its sanctified taste relishes no sweetness in it, but on the contrary, it is nauseous to it. Yea, its holy taste and appetite leads it to think of that which is truly lovely, and naturally suggests it; as a healthy taste and appetite naturally suggests the idea of its proper object. Thus a holy person is led by the Spirit, as he is instructed and led by his holy taste and disposition of heart; whereby, in the lively exercise of grace, he easily distinguishes good and evil, and knows at once what is a suitable amiable behavior towards God, and towards man, in this case and the other, and judges what is right, as it were spontaneously, and of himself, without a particular deduction, by any other arguments than the beauty that is seen, and goodness that is tasted. Thus Christ blames the Pharisees, that they "did not, even of their own selves, judge what was right," without needing miracles to prove it, Luke xii. 57. The apostle seems plainly to have respect to this way of judging of spiritual beauty, in Rom. xii. 2. "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and perfect, and acceptable will of God."

There is such a thing as good taste of natural beauty (which learned men often speak of) that is exercised about temporal things, in judging of them; as about the justness of a speech, the goodness of style, the beauty of a poem, the gracefulness of deportment, &c. A late great philosopher of our nation, writes thus upon it;* "To have a taste, is to give things their real value, to be touched with the good, to be shocked with the ill; not to be dazzled with false lustres, but in spight of all colors, and every thing that might deceive or amuse, to judge soundly. Taste and judgment, then, should be the same thing; and yet it is easy to discern a difference. The judgment forms its opinions from reflection: The reason on this occasion fetches a kind of circuit, to arrive at its

* Chambers' Dictionary, under the word TASTE.

end ; it supposes principles, it draws consequences, and it judges ; but not without a thorough knowledge of the case ; so that after it has pronounced, it is ready to render a reason of its decrees. Good taste observes none of these formalities ; ere it has time to consult, it has taken its side ; as soon as ever the object is presented, the impression is made, the sentiment formed, ask no more of it. As the ear is wounded with a harsh sound, as the smell is soothed with an agreeable odor, before ever the reason have meddled with those objects to judge of them, so the taste opens itself at once, and prevents all reflection. They may come afterwards to confirm it, and discover the secret reasons of its conduct ; but it was not in its power to wait for them. Frequently it happens not to know them at all and what pains soever it uses, cannot discover what it was determined it to think as it did. This conduct is very different from what the judgment observes in its decisions : Unless we choose to say, that good taste is, as it were, a first motion, or a kind of instinct of right reason, which hurries on with rapidity, and conducts more securely, than all the reasonings she could make ; it is a first glance of the eye, which discovers to us the nature and relations of things in a moment.

Now as there is such a kind of taste of the mind as this, which philosophers speak of, whereby persons are guided in their judgment, of the natural beauty, gracefulness, propriety, nobleness, and sublimity of speeches and action, whereby they judge as it were by the glance of the eye, or by inward sensation, and the first impression of the object ; so there is likewise such a thing as a divine taste, given and maintained by the Spirit of God, in the hearts of the saints, whereby they are in like manner led and guided in discerning and distinguishing the true spiritual and holy beauty of actions ; and that more easily, readily, and accurately, as they have more or less of the Spirit of God dwelling in them. And thus "the sons of God are led by the Spirit of God, in their behavior in the world."

A holy disposition and spiritual taste, where grace is strong and lively, will enable a soul to determine what actions are

right and becoming Christians, not only more speedily, but far more exactly, than the greatest abilities without it. This may be illustrated by the manner in which some habits of mind, and dispositions of heart, of a nature inferior to true grace, will teach and guide a man in his actions. As for instance, if a man be a very good natured man, his good nature will teach him better how to act benevolently amongst mankind, and will direct him, on every occasion, to those speeches and actions, which are agreeable to rules of goodness, than the strongest reason will a man of a morose temper. So if a man's heart be under the influence of an entire friendship, and most endeared affection to another; though he be a man of an indifferent capacity, yet this habit of his mind will direct him, far more readily and exactly, to a speech and deportment, or manner of behavior, which shall in all respects be sweet and kind, and agreeable to a benevolent disposition of heart, than the greatest capacity without it. He has as it were a spirit within him, that guides him; the habit of his mind is attended with a taste, by which he immediately relishes that air and mien which is benevolent, and disrelishes the contrary, and causes him to distinguish between one and the other in a moment, more precisely, than the most accurate reasonings can find out in many hours. As the nature and inward tendency of a stone, or other heavy body, that is let fall from aloft, shews the way to the centre of the earth, more exactly in an instant, than the ablest mathematician, without it, could determine, by his most accurate observations, in a whole day. Thus it is that a spiritual disposition and taste teaches and guides a man in his behavior in the world. So an eminently humble, or meek, or charitable disposition, will direct a person of mean capacity to such a behavior, as is agreeable to Christian rules of humility, meekness and charity, far more readily and precisely than the most diligent study, and elaborate reasonings, of a man of the strongest faculties, who has not a Christian spirit within him. So also will a Spirit of love to God, and holy fear and reverence towards God, and filial confidence in God, and an heavenly disposition, teach and guide a man in his behavior.

It is an exceedingly difficult thing for a wicked man, destitute of Christian principles in his heart to guide him, to know how to demean himself like a Christian, with the life and beauty, and heavenly sweetness of a truly holy, humble, Christlike behavior. He knows not how to put on these garments; neither do they fit him, Eccl. x. 2, 3. "A wise man's heart is at his right hand; but a fool's heart is at his left. Yea also, when he that is a fool walketh by the way, his wisdom faileth him, and he saith to every one that he is a fool; with ver. 15. The labor of the foolish wearieth every one of them, because he knoweth not how to go to the city, Prov. x. 32. The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable, Chap. xv. 2. The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright; but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness. And Chap. xvi. 23. The heart of the righteous teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips.

The saints in thus judging of actions by a spiritual taste, have not a particular recourse to express rules of God's word, with respect to every word and action that is before them, the good or evil of which they thus judge: But yet their taste itself, in general, is subject to the rule of God's word, and must be tried by that, and a right reasoning upon it. As a man of a rectified palate judges of particular morsels by his taste; but yet his palate itself must be judged of, whether it be right or no, by certain rules and reasons. But a spiritual taste of soul mightily helps the soul in its reasonings on the word of God, and in judging of the true meaning of its rules: As it removes the prejudices of a depraved appetite, and naturally leads the thoughts in the right channel, casts a light on the word of God, and causes the true meaning, most naturally to come to mind, through the harmony there is between the disposition and relish of a sanctified soul, and the true meaning of the rules of God's word. Yea, this harmony tends to bring the texts themselves to mind, on proper occasions; as the particular state of the stomach and palate tends to bring such particular meats and drinks to mind, as are agreeable to that state. "Thus the children of God are led by the Spirit of God" in judging of actions themselves, and in their medi-

tations upon, and judging of, and applying the rules of God's holy word: And so God "teaches them his statutes, and causes them to understand the way of his precepts;" which the Psalmist so often prays for.

But this leading of the Spirit is a thing exceedingly diverse from that which some call so; which consists not in teaching them God's statutes and precepts, that he has already given; but in giving them new precepts, by immediate inward speech or suggestion; and has in it no tasting the true excellency of things, or judging or discerning the nature of things at all. They do not determine what is the will of God by any taste or relish, or any manner of judging of the nature of things, but by an immediate dictate concerning the thing to be done; there is no such thing as any judgment or wisdom in the case. Whereas in that leading of the Spirit which is peculiar to God's children, is imparted that true wisdom, and holy discretion, so often spoken of in the word of God; which is high above the other way, as the stars are higher than a glow worm; and that which Balaam and Saul (who sometimes were led by the Spirit in that other way) never had, and no natural man can have, without a change of nature.

What has been said of the nature of spiritual understanding, as consisting most essentially in a divine supernatural sense and relish of the heart, not only shews that there is nothing of it in this falsely supposed leading of the Spirit, which has been now spoken of; but also shows the difference between spiritual understanding, and all kinds and forms of enthusiasm, all imaginary sights of God, and Christ, and heaven, all supposed witnessing of the Spirit, and testimonies of the love of God by immediate inward suggestion; and all impressions, of future events, and immediate revelations of any secret facts whatsoever; all enthusiastical impressions and applications of words of scripture, as though they were words now immediately spoken by God to a particular person, in a new meaning, and carrying something more in them, than the words contain as they lie in the Bible; and all interpretations of the mystical meaning of the scripture, by supposed

immediate revelation. None of these things consists in a divine sense and relish of the heart, of the holy beauty and excellency of divine things; nor have they any thing to do with such a sense; but all consist in impressions in the head; all are to be referred to the head of impressions on the imagination, and consist in the exciting external ideas in the mind, either in ideas of outward shapes and colors, or words spoken, or letters written, or ideas of things external and sensible, belonging to actions done, or events accomplished or to be accomplished. An enthusiastical supposed manifestation of the love of God, is made by the exciting an idea of a smiling countenance, or some other pleasant outward appearance, or by the idea of pleasant words spoken, or written, excited in the imagination, or some pleasant bodily sensation. So when persons have an imaginary revelation of some secret fact, it is by exciting external ideas; either of some words, implying a declaration of that fact, or some visible or sensible circumstances of such a fact. So the supposed leading of the Spirit, to do the will of God, in outward behavior, is either by exciting the idea of words (which are outward things) in their minds, either the words of scripture, or other words, which they look upon as an immediate command of God; or else by exciting and impressing strongly the ideas of the outward actions themselves. So when an interpretation of a scripture type or allegory, is immediately, in an extraordinary way, strongly suggested, it is by suggesting words, as though one secretly whispered and told the meaning, or by exciting other ideas in the imagination.

Such sort of experiences and discoveries as these, commonly raise the affections of such as are deluded by them, to a great height, and make a mighty uproar in both soul and body. And a very great part of the false religion that has been in the world, from one age to another, consists in such discoveries as these, and in the affections that flow from them. In such things consisted the experiences of the ancient Pythagoreans among the heathen, and many others among them, who had strange ecstacies and raptures, and pretended to a divine afflatus, and immediate revelations from heaven. In such

things as these seem to have consisted the experiences of the Essenes, an ancient sect among the Jews, at and after the times of the apostles. In such things as these consisted the experiences of many of the ancient Gnostics, and the Montanists, and many other sects of ancient heretics, in the primitive ages of the Christian church. And in such things as these consisted the pretended immediate converse with God and Christ, and saints and angels of heaven, of the Monks, Anchorites, and Recluses, that formerly abounded in the Church of Rome. In such things consisted the pretended high experiences, and great spirituality of many sects of enthusiasts, that swarmed in the world after the Reformation; such as the Anabaptists, Antinomians, and Familists, the followers of N. Stork, Th. Muncer, Jo. Becold, Henry Pfeiser, David George, Casper Swenckfield, Henry Nicolas, Johannes Agricola Eislebius; and the many wild enthusiasts that were in England in the days of Oliver Cromwell; and the followers of Mrs. Hutchison in Newengland; as appears by the particular and large accounts given of all these sects by that eminently holy man, Mr. Samuel Rutherford, in his "Display of the spiritual Antichrist." And in such things as these consisted the experiences of the late French prophets, and their followers. And in these things seems to lie the religion of the many kinds of enthusiasts of the present day. It is by such sort of religion as this, chiefly that Satan transforms himself into an angel of light: And it is that which he has ever most successfully made use of to confound hopeful and happy revivals of religion, from the beginning of the Christian church to this day. When the Spirit of God is poured out, to begin a glorious work, then the old serpent, as fast as possible, and by all means, introduces this bastard religion, and mingles it with the true; which has from time to time soon brought all things into confusion. The pernicious consequence of it is not easily imagined or conceived of, until we see and are amazed with the awful effects of it, and the dismal desolation it has made. If the revival of true religion be very great in its beginning, yet if this bastard comes in, there is danger of its doing as Gideon's bastard Abimelech did, who

never left until he had slain all his threescore and ten true-born sons, excepting one, that was forced to fly. Great and strict therefore should be the watch and guard that ministers maintain against such things, especially at a time of great awakening: For men, especially the common people, are easily bewitched with such things; they having such a glaring and glistering shew of high religion; and the devil hiding his own shape, and appearing as an angel of light, that men may not be afraid of him, but may adore him.

The imagination or phantasy seems to be that wherein are formed all those delusions of Satan, which those are carried away with, who are under the influence of false religion, and counterfeit graces and affections. Here is the devil's grand lurking place, the very nest of foul and delusive spirits. It is very much to be doubted, whether the devil can come at the soul of man at all to affect it, or to excite any thought or motion, or produce any effect whatsoever in it, any other way, than by the phantasy; which is that power of the soul, by which it receives, and is the subject of the species, or ideas of outward and sensible things. As to the laws and means which the Creator has established, for the intercourse and communication of unbodied spirits, we know nothing about them; we do not know by what medium they manifest their thoughts to each other, or excite thoughts in each other. But as to spirits that are united to bodies, those bodies God has united them to, are their medium of communication. They have no other medium of acting on other creatures, or being acted on by them, than the body. Therefore it is not to be supposed that Satan can excite any thought, or produce any effect in the soul of man, any otherwise, than by some motion of the animal spirits, or by causing some motion or alteration in something which appertains to the body. There is this reason to think that the devil cannot produce thoughts in the soul immediately, or any other way than by the medium of the body, viz. that he cannot immediately see or know the thoughts of the soul: It is abundantly declared in the scripture, to be peculiar to the omniscient God to do that. But it is not likely that the devil can immediately produce an effect,

which is out of the reach of his immediate view. It seems unreasonable to suppose, that his immediate agency should be out of his own sight, or that it should be impossible for him to see what he himself immediately does. Is it not unreasonable to suppose, that any spirit or intelligent agent, should by the act of his will, produce effects according to his understanding, or agreeable to his own thoughts, and that immediately, and yet the effects produced be beyond the reach of his understanding, or where he can have no immediate perception or discerning at all? But if this be so, that the devil cannot produce thoughts in the soul immediately, or any other way than by the animal spirits, or by the body, then it follows, that he never brings to pass any thing in the soul, but by the imagination or phantasy, or by exciting external ideas. For we know that alterations in the body do immediately excite no other sort of ideas in the mind, but external ideas, or ideas of the outward senses, or ideas which are of the same outward nature. As to reflection, abstraction, reasoning, &c. and those thoughts and inward motions which are the fruits of these acts of the mind, they are not the next effects of impressions on the body. So that it must be only by the imagination, that Satan has access to the soul, to tempt and delude it, or suggest any thing to it.* And this seems to be the reason

* "The imagination is that room of the soul wherein the devil doth often appear. Indeed (to speak exactly) the devil hath no efficient power over the rational part of a man; he cannot change the will, he cannot alter the heart of a man. So that the utmost he can do, in tempting a man to sin, is by suasion and suggestion only. But how doth the devil do this? Even by working upon the imagination. He observeth the temper, and bodily constitution of a man; and thereupon suggests to his fancy, and injects his fiery darts thereinto, by which the mind will come to be wrought upon. The devil then, though he hath no imperious efficacy over thy will, yet because he can thus stir and move thy imagination, and thou being naturally destitute of grace, canst not withstand these suggestions: Hence it is that any sin in thy imagination, though but in the outward works of the soul, yet doth quickly lay hold on all. And indeed, by this means, do arise those horrible delusions, that are in many erroneous ways of religion; all is because their imaginations are corrupted. Yea, how often are these diabolical delusions of the imagination taken for the gracious operation of God's Spirit? It is from hence that many

why persons that are under the disease of melancholy, are commonly so visibly and remarkably subject to the suggestions and temptations of Satan; that being a disease which peculiarly affects the animal spirits, and is attended with weakness of that part of the body which is the fountain of the animal spirits, even the brain, which is, as it were, the seat of the phantasy. It is by impressions made on the brain, that any ideas are excited in the mind, by the motion of the animal spirits, or any changes made in the body. The brain being thus weakened and diseased, it is less under the command of the higher faculties of the soul, and yields the more easily to extrinsic impressions, and is overpowered by the disordered motions of the animal spirits; and so the devil has greater advantage to affect the mind, by working on the imagination. And thus Satan, when he casts in those horrid suggestions into the minds of many melancholy persons, in which they have no hand themselves, he does it by exciting imaginary ideas, either of some dreadful words or sentences, or other horrid outward ideas. And when he tempts other persons who are not melancholy, he does it by presenting to the imagination, in a lively and alluring manner, the objects of their lusts, or by exciting ideas of words, and so by them exciting thoughts; or by promoting an imagination of outward actions, events, circumstances, &c. Innumerable are the ways by which the mind might be led on to all kind of evil thoughts, by exciting external ideas in the imagination.

have pretended to enthusiasms: They leave the scriptures, and wholly attend to what they perceive and feel within them." *Burgess on Original Sin*, p. 369.

The great Turretine, speaking on that question, What is the power of angels? says, "As to bodies there is no doubt but that they can do a great deal upon all sorts of elementary and sublunary bodies, to move them locally and variously to agitate them. It is also certain, that they can act upon the external and internal senses, to excite them or to bind them. But as to the rational soul itself, they can do nothing immediately upon that; for to God alone, who knows and searches the hearts, and who has them in his hands, does it also appertain to bow and move them whithersoever he will. But angels can act upon the rational soul, only mediately, by imaginations." *Theolog. Elench.* Loc. VII. Quest. 7.

If persons keep no guard at these avenues of Satan, by which he has access to the soul, to tempt and delude it, they will be likely to have enough of him. And especially, if instead of guarding against him, they lay themselves open to him, and seek and invite him, because he appears as an angel of light, and counterfeits the illuminations and graces of the Spirit of God, by inward whispers, and immediate suggestions of facts and events, pleasant voices, beautiful images, and other impressions on the imagination. There are many who are deluded by such things, and are lifted up with them, and seek after them, that have a continued course of them, and can have them almost when they will; and especially when their pride and vain glory has most occasion for them, to make a shew of them before company. It is with them, something as it is with those who are professors of the art of telling where lost things are to be found, by impressions made on their imaginations; they laying themselves open to the devil, he is always at hand to give them the desired impression.

Before I finish what I would say on this head of imaginations, counterfeiting spiritual light, and affections arising from them, I would renewedly (to prevent misunderstanding of what has been said) desire it may be observed, that I am far from determining, that no affections are spiritual which are attended with imaginary ideas. Such is the nature of man, that he can scarcely think of any thing intensely, without some kind of outward ideas. They arise and interpose themselves unavoidably, in the course of a man's thoughts; though oftentimes they are very confused, and are not what the mind regards. When the mind is much engaged, and the thoughts intense, oftentimes the imagination is more strong, and the outward idea more lively, especially in persons of some constitutions of body. But there is a great difference between these two things, viz. lively imaginations arising from strong affections, and strong affections arising from lively imaginations. The former may be, and doubtless often is, in case of truly gracious affections. The affections do not arise from the imagination, nor have any depend-

ence upon it; but, on the contrary, the imagination is only the accidental effect, or consequent of the affection, through the infirmity of human nature. But when the latter is the case, as it often is, that the affection arises from the imagination, and is built upon it, as its foundation, instead of a spiritual illumination or discovery, then is the affection, however elevated, worthless and vain. And this is the drift of what has been now said, of impressions on the imagination. Having observed this, I proceed to another mark of gracious affections.

V. Truly gracious affections are attended with a reasonable and spiritual conviction of the judgment, of the reality and certainty of divine things.

This seems to be implied in the text that was laid as the foundation of this discourse. "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory."

All those who are truly gracious persons have a solid, full, thorough and effectual conviction of the truth of the great things of the gospel; I mean, that they no longer halt between two opinions; the great doctrines of the gospel cease to be any longer doubtful things, or matters of opinion, which, though probable, are yet disputable; but with them, they are points settled and determined, as undoubted and indisputable; so that they are not afraid to venture their all upon their truth. Their conviction is an effectual conviction; so that the great, spiritual, mysterious, and invisible things of the gospel, have the influence of real and certain things upon them; they have the weight and power of real things in their hearts; and accordingly rule in their affections, and govern them through the course of their lives. With respect to Christ's being the Son of God, and Saviour of the world, and the great things he has revealed concerning himself, and his Father, and another world, they have not only a predominating opinion that these things are true, and so yield their assent, as they do in many other matters of doubtful speculation; but they see that it is really so; their eyes are opened, so that they see that really Jesus is the Christ, the

Son of the living God. And as to the things which Christ has revealed, of God's eternal purposes and designs, concerning fallen man, and the glorious and everlasting things prepared for the saints in another world, they see that they are so indeed; and therefore these things are of great weight with them, and have a mighty power upon their hearts, and influence over their practice, in some measure answerable to their infinite importance.

That all true Christians have such a kind of conviction of the truth of the things of the gospel, is abundantly manifest from the holy scriptures. I will mention a few places of many, Matth. xvi. 15, 16, 17. "But whom say ye that I am? Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona :....My Father which is in heaven hath revealed it unto thee. John vi. 68, 69. Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God. John xvii. 6, 7, 8. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me, are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. Acts viii. 37. If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayst. 2. Cor. iv. 11, 12, 13, 14. We which live, are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake....Death worketh in us....We having the spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak; knowing, that he which raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you. Together with ver. 16. For which cause we faint not. And ver. 18. While we look not at the things which are seen, &c. And chap. v. 1. For we know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God. And ver. 6, 7, 8. Therefore we are always confident, knowing that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord; for we walk by faith, not by sight.

We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord. 2. Tim. i. 12. For the which cause I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. Heb. iii. 6. Whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end. Heb. xi. 1. Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen; together with that whole chapter. 1. John iv. 13, 14, 15, 16. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. And we have seen, and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. Chap. v. 4, 5. For whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?"

Therefore truly gracious affections are attended with such a kind of conviction and persuasion of the truth of the things of the gospel, and sight of their evidence and reality, as these and other scriptures speak of.

There are many religious affections, which are not attended with such a conviction of the judgment. There are many apprehensions and ideas which some have, that they call divine discoveries, which are affecting, but not convincing. Though for a little while they may seem to be more persuaded of the truth of the things of religion than they used to be, and may yield a forward assent, like many of Christ's hearers, who believed for a while; yet they have no thorough and effectual conviction; nor is there any great abiding change in them, in this respect, that whereas formerly they did not realize the great things of the gospel, now these things, with regard to reality and certainty, appear new to them, and they behold them, quite in another view than they used to do. There are many persons who have been exceedingly raised

with religious affections, and think they have been converted, they do not go about the world any more convinced of the truth of the gospel, than they used to be; or at least, there is no remarkable alteration: They are not men who live under the influence and power of a realizing conviction of the infinite and eternal things which the gospel reveals; if they were, it would be impossible for them to live as they do. Because their affections are not attended with a thorough conviction of the mind, they are not at all to be depended on; however great a show and noise they make, it is like the blaze of tow, or crackling of thorns, or like the forward flourishing blade on stony ground, that has no root, nor deepness of earth to maintain its life.

Some persons, under high affections, and a confident persuasion of their good estate, have that, which they very ignorantly call a seeing the truth of the word of God, and which is very far from it, after this manner; they have some text of scripture coming to their minds in a sudden and extraordinary manner, immediately declaring unto them (as they suppose) that their sins are forgiven, or that God loves them, and will save them; and it may be, have a chain of scriptures coming one after another, to the same purpose; and they are convinced that it is truth; i. e. they are confident that it is certainly so, that their sins are forgiven, and God does love them, &c....they say they know it is so; and when the words of scripture are suggested to them, and as they suppose immediately spoken to them by God, in this meaning, they are ready to cry out, Truth, truth! It is certainly so! The word of God is true! And this they call a seeing the truth of the word of God. Whereas the whole of their faith amounts to no more, than only a strong confidence of their own good estate, and so a confidence that these words are true, which they suppose tell them they are in a good estate: When indeed (as was shown before) there is no scripture which declares that any person is in a good estate directly, or any other way than by consequence. So that this, instead of being a real sight of the truth of the word of God, is a sight of nothing but a phantom, and is wholly a delusion. Truly to see the truth

of the word of God, is to see the truth of the gospel; which is the glorious doctrine the word of God contains, concerning God, and Jesus Christ, and the way of salvation by him, and the world of glory that he is entered into, and purchased for all them who believe; and not a revelation that such and such particular persons are true Christians, and shall go to heaven. Therefore those affections which arise from no other persuasion of the truth of the word of God than this, arise from delusion, and not true conviction; and consequently are themselves delusive and vain.

But if the religious affections that persons have, do indeed arise from a strong persuasion of the truth of the Christian religion, their affections are not the better, unless their persuasion be a reasonable persuasion or conviction. By a reasonable conviction, I mean a conviction founded on real evidence, or upon that which is a good reason, or just ground of conviction. Men may have a strong persuasion that the Christian religion is true, when their persuasion is not at all built on evidence, but altogether on education, and the opinion of others; as many Mahometans are strongly persuaded of the truth of the Mahometan religion, because their fathers, and neighbors, and nation believe it. That belief of the truth of the Christian religion, which is built on the very same grounds with a Mahometan's belief of the Mahometan religion, is the same sort of belief. And though the thing believed happens to be better, yet that does not make the belief itself to be of a better sort; for though the thing believed happens to be true, yet the belief of it is not owing to this truth, but to education. So that as the conviction is no better than the Mahometan's conviction; so the affections that flow from it, are no better in themselves, than the religious affections of Mahometans.

But if that belief of Christian doctrines, which persons' affections arise from, be not merely from education, but indeed from reasons and arguments which are offered, it will not from thence necessarily follow, that their affections are truly gracious: For in order to that, it is requisite, not only that the belief which their affections arise from, should be a rea-

tenable, but also a spiritual belief or conviction. I suppose none will doubt but that some natural men do yield a kind of assent of their judgments to the truth of the Christian religion, from the rational proofs or arguments that are offered to evince it. Judas, without doubt, thought Jesus to be the Messiah, from the things which he saw and heard; but yet all along was a devil. So in John ii. 23, 24, 25, we read of many that believed in Christ's name, when they saw the miracles that he did; whom yet Christ knew had not that within them, which was to be depended on. So Simon the sorcerer believed, when he beheld the miracles and signs which were done; but yet remained in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity, Acts viii. 13, 23. And if there is such a belief or assent of the judgment in some natural men, none can doubt but that religious affections may arise from that assent or belief; as we read of some who believed for a while, that were greatly affected, and anon with joy received the word.

It is evident that there is such a thing as a spiritual belief or conviction of the truth of the things of the gospel, or a belief that is peculiar to those who are spiritual, or who are regenerated, and have the Spirit of God, in his holy communications, and dwelling in them as a vital principle. So that the conviction they have, does not only differ from that which natural men have, in its concomitants, in that it is accompanied with good works; but the belief itself is diverse, the assent and conviction of the judgment is of a kind peculiar to those who are spiritual, and that which natural men are wholly destitute of. This is evident by the scripture, if any thing at all is so, John xvii. 8. "They have believed that thou didst send me. Tit. i. 1. According to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness. John xvi. 27. The Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God. 1 John iv. 15. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. Chap. v. 1. Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God. Ver. 10. He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself."

What a spiritual conviction of the judgment is, we are naturally led to determine from what has been said already, under the former head of a spiritual understanding. The conviction of the judgment arises from the illumination of the understanding; the passing of a right judgment on things, depends on having a right apprehension or idea of things. And therefore it follows, that a spiritual conviction of the truth of the great things of the gospel, is such a conviction, as arises from having a spiritual view or apprehension of those things in the mind. And this is also evident from the scripture, which often represents, that a saving belief of the reality and divinity of the things proposed and exhibited to us in the gospel, is from the Spirit of God's enlightening the mind, to have right apprehensions of the nature of those things, and so as it were unveiling things, or revealing them, and enabling the mind to view them and see them as they are. Luke x. 21, 22. "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father: And no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him. John vi. 40. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life." Where it is plain, that true faith arises from a spiritual sight of Christ. And John xvii. 6, 7, 8. "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me, are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me." Where Christ's manifesting God's name to the disciples, or giving them a true apprehension and view of divine things, was that whereby they knew that Christ's doctrine was of God, and that Christ himself was of him, and was sent by him, Matth. xvi. 16, 17. "Simon Peter said; thou art Christ, the Son of the living

God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: For flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. 1 John v. 10. He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself, Gal. i. 14, 15, 16. Being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood."

If it be so, that that is a spiritual conviction of the divinity and reality of the things exhibited in the gospel, which arises from a spiritual understanding of those things; I have shown already what that is, viz. a sense and taste of the divine, supreme, and holy excellency and beauty of those things. So that then is the mind spiritually convinced of the divinity and truth of the great things of the gospel, when that conviction arises, either directly or remotely, from such a sense or view of their divine excellency and glory as is there exhibited. This clearly follows, from things that have been already said: And for this the scripture is very plain and express, 2 Cor. iv. 3....6. "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ." Together with the last verse of the foregoing chapter, which introduces this, "but we all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." Nothing can be more evident, than that a saving belief of the gospel is here spoken of, by the apostle, as arising from the mind's being enlightened to behold the divine glory of the things it exhibits.

This view or sense of the divine glory, and unparalleled beauty of the things exhibited to us in the gospel, has a tendency to convince the mind of their divinity, two ways; directly, and more indirectly, and remotely. 1. A view of this divine glory directly convinces the mind of the divinity of these things, as this glory is in itself a direct, clear, and all-conquering evidence of it; especially when clearly discovered, or when this supernatural sense is given in a good degree.

He that has his judgment thus directly convinced and assured of the divinity of the things of the gospel, by a clear view of their divine glory, has a reasonable conviction; his belief and assurance is altogether agreeable to reason; because the divine glory and beauty of divine things is in itself, real evidence of their divinity, and the most direct and strong evidence. He that truly sees the divine, transcendent, supreme glory of those things which are divine, does as it were know their divinity intuitively: He not only argues that they are divine, but he sees that they are divine; he sees that in them wherein divinity chiefly consists, for in this glory, which is so vastly and inexpressibly distinguished from the glory of artificial things, and all other glory, does mainly consist the true notion of divinity. God is God, and distinguished from all other beings, and exalted above them, chiefly by his divine beauty, which is infinitely diverse from all other beauty.—They therefore that see the stamp of this glory in divine things, they see divinity in them, they see God in them, and so see them to be divine; because they see that in them wherein the truest idea of divinity does consist. Thus a soul may have a kind of intuitive knowledge of the divinity of the things exhibited in the gospel; not that he judges the doctrines of the gospel to be from God, without any argument or deduction at all; but it is without any long chain of arguments; the argument is but one, and the evidence direct; the mind ascends to the truth of the gospel but by one step, and that is its divine glory.

It would be very strange, if any professing Christian should deny it to be possible, that there should be an excellency in

divine things, which is so transcendent, and exceedingly different from what is in other things, that if it were seen, would evidently distinguish them. We cannot rationally doubt, but that things that are divine, that appertain to the Supreme Being, are vastly different from things that are human: That there is a Godlike, high, and glorious excellency in them, that does so distinguish them from the things which are of men, that the difference is ineffable; and therefore such, as, if seen, will have a most convincing, satisfying influence upon any one, that they are what they are, viz. divine. Doubtless there is that glory and excellency in the divine Being, by which he is so infinitely distinguished from all other beings, that if it were seen, he might be known by it. It would therefore be very unreasonable to deny, that it is possible for God to give manifestations of this distinguishing excellency, in things by which he is pleased to make himself known; and that this distinguishing excellency may be clearly seen in them. There are natural excellencies, that are very evidently distinguishing of the subjects or authors, to any one who beholds them. How vastly is the speech of an understanding man different from that of a little child! And how greatly distinguished is the speech of some men of great genius, as Homer, Cicero, Milton, Locke, Addison, and others, from that of many other understanding men! There are no limits to be set to the degrees of manifestation of mental excellency, that there may be in speech. But the appearances of the natural perfections of God, in the manifestations he makes of himself, may doubtless be unspeakably more evidently distinguishing, than the appearances of those excellencies of worms of the dust, in which they differ one from another. He that is well acquainted with mankind, and their works, by viewing the sun, may know it is no human work. And it is reasonable to suppose, that when Christ comes at the end of the world, in the glory of his Father, it will be with such ineffable appearances of divinity, as will leave no doubt to the inhabitants of the world, even the most obstinate infidels, that he who appears is a divine person. But above all, do the manifestations of the moral and spiritual glory of the divine Being

(which is the proper beauty of the divinity) bring their own evidence, and tend to assure the heart. Thus the disciples were assured that Jesus was the Son of God, "for they beheld his glory, as the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, John i. 14." When Christ appeared in the glory of his transfiguration to his disciples, with that outward glory to their bodily eyes, which was a sweet and admirable symbol and semblance of his spiritual glory, together with his spiritual glory itself, manifested to their minds; the manifestation of glory was such, as did perfectly, and with good reason, assure them of his divinity; as appears by what one of them, viz. the Apostle Peter, says concerning it, 2 Pet. i. 16, 17, 18. "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye witnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father, honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount." The apostle calls that mount, the holy mount, because the manifestations of Christ which were there made to their minds, and which their minds were especially impressed and ravished with, were the glory of his holiness, or the beauty of his moral excellency; or, as another of these disciples, who saw it, expresses it, "his glory, as full of grace and truth."

Now this distinguishing glory of the divine Being has its brightest appearance and manifestation, in the things proposed and exhibited to us in the gospel, the doctrines there taught, the word there spoken, and the divine counsels, acts and works there revealed. These things have the clearest, most admirable, and distinguishing representations and exhibitions of the glory of God's moral perfections, that ever were made to the world. And if there be such a distinguishing, evidential manifestation of divine glory in the gospel, it is reasonable to suppose that there may be such a thing as seeing it: What should hinder but that it may be seen? It is no argument that it cannot be seen, that some do not see it; though they may

be discerning men in temporal matters. If there be such ineffable, distinguishing, evidential excellencies in the gospel, it is reasonable to suppose, that they are such as are not to be discerned, but by the special influence and enlightenings of the Spirit of God. There is need of uncommon force of mind to discern the distinguishing excellencies of the works of authors of great genius: Those things in Milton, which, to mean judges, appear tasteless and imperfections, are his inimitable excellencies in the eyes of those, who are of greater discerning and better taste. And if there be a book, which God is the author of, it is most reasonable to suppose, that the distinguishing glories of his word are of such a kind, as that the corruption of men's hearts, which above all things alienates men from the Deity, and makes the heart dull and stupid to any sense or taste of those things wherein the moral glory of the divine perfections consists: I say, it is but reasonable to suppose, that this would blind men from discerning the beauties of such a book; and that therefore they will not see them, but as God is pleased to enlighten them, and restore an holy taste, to discern and relish divine beauties.

This sense of the spiritual excellency and beauty of divine things, does also tend directly to convince the mind of the truth of the gospel, as there are very many of the most important things declared in the gospel, that are hid from the eyes of natural men, the truth of which does in effect consist in this excellency, or does so immediately depend upon it, and result from it, that in this excellency's being seen, the truth of those things is seen. As soon as ever the eyes are opened to behold the holy beauty and amiableness that is in divine things, a multitude of most important doctrines of the gospel that depend upon it (which all appear strange and dark to natural men) are at once seen to be true. As for instance, hereby appears the truth of what the word of God declares concerning the exceeding evil of sin; for the same eye that discerns the transcendent beauty of holiness, necessarily therein sees the exceeding odiousness of sin: The same taste which relishes the sweetness of true moral good, tastes the bitterness of moral evil. And by this means a man sees his own

sinfulness and loathsomeness; for he has now a sense to discern objects of this nature; and so sees the truth of what the word of God declares concerning the exceeding sinfulness of mankind, which before he did not see. He now sees the dreadful pollution of his heart, and the desperate depravity of his nature, in a new manner; for his soul has now a sense given it to feel the pain of such a disease; and this shows him the truth of what the scripture reveals concerning the corruption of man's nature, his original sin, and the ruinous, undone condition man is in, and his need of a Saviour, his need of the mighty power of God to renew his heart and change his nature. Men, by seeing the true excellency of holiness, do see the glory of all those things, which both reason and scripture shew to be in the divine Being; for it has been shown, that the glory of them depends on this: And hereby they see the truth of all that the scripture declares concerning God's glorious excellency and majesty, his being the fountain of all good, the only happiness of the creature, &c. And this again shews the mind the truth of what the scripture teaches concerning the evil of sin against so glorious a God; and also the truth of what it teaches concerning sin's just desert of that dreadful punishment which it reveals; and also concerning the impossibility of our offering any satisfaction, or sufficient atonement for that which is so infinitely evil and heinous. And this again shews the truth of what the scripture reveals concerning the necessity of a Saviour, to offer an atonement of infinite value for sin. And this sense of spiritual beauty that has been spoken of, enables the soul to see the glory of those things which the gospel reveals concerning the person of Christ; and so enables to see the exceeding beauty and dignity of his person, appearing in what the gospel exhibits of his word, works, acts, and life: And this apprehension of the superlative dignity of his person, shews the truth of what the gospel declares concerning the value of his blood and righteousness, and so the infinite excellency of that offering he has made to God for us, and so its sufficiency to atone for our sins, and recommend us to God. And thus the Spirit of God discovers the way of salvation by Christ; thus the soul

sees the fitness and suitableness of this way of salvation, the admirable wisdom of the contrivance, and the perfect answerableness of the provision that the gospel exhibits (as made for us) to our necessities. A sense of true divine beauty being given to the soul, the soul discerns the beauty of every part of the gospel scheme. This also shews the soul the truth of what the word of God declares concerning man's chief happiness, as consisting in holy exercises and enjoyments. This shews the truth, of what the gospel declares concerning the unspeakable glory of the heavenly state. And what the prophecies of the Old Testament, and the writings of the apostles declare concerning the glory of the Messiah's kingdom, is now all plain; and also what the scripture teaches concerning the reasons and grounds of our duty. The truth of all these things revealed in the scripture, and many more that might be mentioned, appears to the soul, only by imparting that spiritual taste of divine beauty, which has been spoken of; they being hidden things to the soul before.

And besides all this, the truth of all those things which the scripture says about experimental religion, is hereby known; for they are now experienced. And this convinces the soul, that one who knew the heart of man, better than we know our own hearts, and perfectly knew the nature of virtue and holiness, was the author of the scriptures. And the opening to view, with such clearness, such a world of wonderful and glorious truth in the gospel, that before was unknown, being quite above the view of a natural eye, but now appearing so clear and bright, has a powerful and invincible influence on the soul, to persuade of the divinity of the gospel.

Unless men may come to a reasonable, solid persuasion and conviction of the truth of the gospel, by the internal evidences of it, in the way that has been spoken, viz. by a sight of its glory; it is impossible that those who are illiterate, and unacquainted with history, should have any thorough and effectual conviction of it at all. They may without this, see a great deal of probability of it; it may be reasonable for them to give much credit to what learned men and historians tell

them; and they may tell them so much, that it may look very probable and rational to them, that the Christian religion is true; and so much that they would be very unreasonable not to entertain this opinion. But to have a conviction, so clear, and evident, and assuring, as to be sufficient to induce them, with boldness to sell all, confidently and fearlessly to run the venture of the loss of all things, and of enduring the most exquisite and long continued torments, and to trample the world under foot, and count all things but dung for Christ; the evidence they can have from history, cannot be sufficient. It is impossible that men, who have not something of a general view of the historical world, or the series of history from age to age, should come at the force of arguments for the truth of Christianity, drawn from history, to that degree, as effectually to induce them to venture their all upon it. After all that learned men have said to them, there will remain innumerable doubts on their minds; they will be ready, when pinched with some great trial of their faith, to say, "How do I know this, or that? How do I know when these histories were written? Learned men tell me these histories were so and so attested in the day of them; but how do I know that there were such attestations then? They tell me there is equal reason to believe these facts, as any whatsoever that are related at such a distance; but how do I know that other facts which are related of those ages, ever were?" Those who have not something of a general view of the series of historical events, and of the state of mankind from age to age, cannot see the clear evidence from history, of the truth of facts, in distant ages; but there will endless doubts and scruples remain.

But the gospel was not given only for learned men. There are at least nineteen in twenty, if not ninetynine in an hundred, of those for whom the scriptures were written, that are not capable of any certain or effectual conviction of the divine authority of the scriptures, by such arguments as learned men make use of. If men who have been brought up in Heathenism, must wait for a clear and certain conviction of the truth of Christianity, until they have learning and ac-

quaintance with the histories of politer nations, enough to see clearly the force of such kind of arguments; it will make the evidence of the gospel to them immensely cumbersome, and will render the propagation of the gospel among them infinitely difficult. Miserable is the condition of the Houssatunnuck Indians, and others, who have lately manifested a desire to be instructed in Christianity, if they can come at no evidence of the truth of Christianity, sufficient to induce them to sell all for Christ, in any other way but this.

It is unreasonable to suppose, that God has provided for his people no more than probable evidences of the truth of the gospel. He has with great care, abundantly provided, and given them, the most convincing, assuring, satisfying and manifold evidence of his faithfulness in the covenant of grace; and as David says, "made a covenant, ordered in all things and sure." Therefore it is rational to suppose, that at the same time, he would not fail of ordering the matter so, that there should not be wanting, as great, and clear evidence, that this is his covenant, and that these promises are his promises; or, which is the same thing, that the Christian religion is true, and that the gospel is his word. Otherwise in vain are those great assurances he has given of his faithfulness in his covenant, by confirming it with his oath, and so variously establishing it by seals and pledges. For the evidence that it is his covenant, is properly the foundation on which all the force and effect of those other assurances do stand. We may therefore undoubtedly suppose and conclude, that there is some sort of evidence which God has given, that this covenant, and these promises are his, beyond all mere probability; that there are some grounds of assurance of it held forth, which, if we were not blind to them, tend to give an higher persuasion, than any arguing from history, human tradition, &c. which the illiterate and unacquainted with history are capable of; yea, that which is good ground of the highest and most perfect assurance, that mankind have in any case whatsoever, agreeable to those high expressions which the apostle uses, Heb. x. 22. "Let us draw near in full assurance of faith. And Col. ii. 2. That their hearts might

be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ." It is reasonable to suppose, that God would give the greatest evidence of those things which are greatest, and the truth of which is of greatest importance to us: And that we therefore, if we are wise, and act rationally, shall have the greatest desire of having full, undoubting, and perfect assurance of. But it is certain, that such an assurance is not to be attained by the greater part of them who live under the gospel, by arguments fetched from ancient traditions, histories, and monuments.

And if we come to fact and experience, there is not the least reason to suppose, that one in an hundred of those who have been sincere Christians, and have had a heart to sell all for Christ, have come by their conviction of the truth of the gospel this way. If we read over the histories of the many thousands that died martyrs for Christ, since the beginning of the reformation, and have cheerfully undergone extreme tortures in a confidence of the truth of the gospel, and consider their circumstances and advantages; how few of them were there, that we can reasonably suppose, ever came by their assured persuasion this way; or indeed for whom it was possible, reasonably to receive so full and strong an assurance, from such arguments! Many of them were weak women and children, and the greater part of them illiterate persons, many of whom had been brought up in popish ignorance and darkness, and were but newly come out of it, and lived and died in times wherein those arguments for the truth of Christianity, from antiquity and history, had been but very imperfectly handled. And indeed, it is but very lately that these arguments have been set in a clear and convincing light, even by learned men themselves: And since it has been done, there never were fewer thorough believers among those who have been educated in the true religion; infidelity never prevailed so much, in any age, as in this, wherein these arguments are handled to the greatest advantage.

The true martyrs of Jesus Christ, are not those who have only been strong in opinion that the gospel of Christ is true, but those that have seen the truth of it; as the very name of martyrs or witnesses (by which they are called in scripture) implies. Those are very improperly called witnesses of the truth of any thing, who only declare they are very much of opinion that such a thing is true. Those only are proper witnesses, who can, and do testify, that they have seen the truth of the thing they assert. John iii. 11. "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen. John i. 34. And I saw, and bare record, that this is the Son of God. 1 John iv. 14. And we have seen and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. Acts xxii. 14, 15. The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldst know his will, and see that just one, and shouldst hear the voice of his mouth; for thou shalt be his witness unto all men, of what thou hast seen and heard." But the true martyrs of Jesus Christ are called his witnesses; and all the saints, who by their holy practice under great trials, declare that faith, which is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen, are called witnesses, Heb. xi. 1, and xii. 1, because by their profession and practice, they declare their assurance of the truth and divinity of the gospel; having had the eyes of their minds enlightened to see divinity in the gospel, or to behold that unparalleled, ineffably excellent, and truly divine glory shining in it, which is altogether distinguishing, evidential, and convincing: So that they may truly be said to have seen God in it, and to have seen that it is indeed divine; and so can speak in the style of witnesses; and not only say, that they think the gospel is divine, but say, that it is divine, giving it in as their testimony, because they have seen it to be so. Doubtless Peter, James and John, after they had seen that excellent glory of Christ in the mount, would have been ready, when they came down to speak in the language of witnesses, and to say positively that Jesus is the Son of God; as Peter says, they were eye witnesses, 2 Pet. i. 16. And so all nations will be ready positively to say this, when they shall behold his glory

at the day of judgment; though what will be universally seen, will be only his natural glory, and not his moral and spiritual glory, which is much more distinguishing. But yet it must be noted, that among those who have a spiritual sight of the divine glory of the gospel, there is a great variety of degrees of strength of faith, as there is a vast variety of the degrees of clearness of views of this glory: But there is no true and saving faith, or spiritual conviction of the judgment, of the truth of the gospel, that has nothing in it, of this manifestation of its internal evidence in some degree. The gospel of the blessed God does not go abroad a begging for its evidence, so much as some think; it has its highest and most proper evidence in itself. Though great use may be made of external arguments, they are not to be neglected, but highly prized and valued; for they may be greatly serviceable to awaken unbelievers, and bring them to serious consideration, and to confirm the faith of true saints; yea, they may be in some respects subservient to the begetting of a saving faith in men. Though what was said before remains true, that there is no spiritual conviction of the judgment, but what arises from an apprehension of the spiritual beauty and glory of divine things: For, as has been observed, this apprehension or view has a tendency to convince the mind of the truth of the gospel, two ways, either directly or indirectly. Having therefore already observed how it does this directly, I proceed now,

2. To observe how a view of this divine glory does convince the mind of the truth of Christianity, more indirectly.

First, It doth so, as the prejudices of the heart against the truth of divine things are hereby removed, so that the mind thereby lies open to the force of the reasons which are offered. The mind of man is naturally full of enmity against the doctrines of the gospel; which is a disadvantage to those arguments that prove their truth, and causes them to lose their force upon the mind; but when a person has discovered to him the divine excellency of Christian doctrines, this destroys that enmity, and removes the prejudices, and sanctifies the reason, and causes it to be open and free. Hence is a vast

difference, as to the force that arguments have to convince the mind. Hence was the very different effect, which Christ's miracles had to convince the disciples, from what they had to convince the Scribes and Pharisees: Not that they had a stronger reason, or had their reason more improved; but their reason was sanctified, and those blinding prejudices, which the Scribes and Pharisees were under, were removed by the sense they had of the excellency of Christ and his doctrine.

Secondly, It not only removes the hinderances of reason, but positively helps reason. It makes even the speculative notions more lively. It assists and engages the attention of the mind to that kind of objects which causes it to have a clearer view of them, and more clearly to see their mutual relations. The ideas themselves, which otherwise are dim and obscure, by this means have a light cast upon them, and are impressed with greater strength, so that the mind can better judge of them; as he that beholds the objects on the face of the earth, when the light of the sun is cast upon them, is under greater advantage to discern them, in their true forms, and mutual relations, and to see the evidences of divine wisdom and skill in their contrivance, than he that sees them in a dim star light, or twilight.

What has been said, may serve in some measure to shew the nature of a spiritual conviction of the judgment of the truth and reality of divine things; and so to distinguish truly gracious affections from others; for gracious affections are evermore attended with such a conviction of the judgment.

But before I dismiss this head, it will be needful to observe the ways whereby some are deceived, with respect to this matter; and take notice of several things, that are sometimes taken for a spiritual and saving belief of the truth of the things of religion, which are indeed very diverse from it.

1. There is a degree of conviction of the truth of the great things of religion, that arises from the common enlightenings of the Spirit of God. That more lively and sensible apprehension of the things of religion, with respect to what is natural in them, such as natural men have who are under awak-

enings and common illuminations, will give some degree of conviction of the truth of divine things, beyond what they had before they were thus enlightened. For hereby they see the manifestations there are, in the revelation made in the holy scriptures, and things exhibited in that revelation, of the natural perfections of God; such as his greatness, power, and awful majesty; which tends to convince the mind, that this is the word of a great and terrible God. From the tokens there are of God's greatness ard majesty in his word and works which they have a great sense of, from the common influence of the Spirit of God, they may have a much greater conviction that these are indeed the words and works of a very great invisible Being. And the lively apprehension of the greatness of God, which natural men may have, tends to make them sensible of the great guilt, which sin against such a God brings, and the dreadfulness of his wrath for sin. And this tends to cause them more easily and fully to believe the revelation the scripture makes of another world, and of the extreme misery it threatens, there to be inflicted on sinners. And so from that sense of the great natural good there is in the things of religion, which is sometimes given in common illuminations men may be the more induced to believe the truth of religion. These things persons may have, and yet have no sense of the beauty and amiableness of the moral and holy excellency that is in the things of religion; and therefore no spiritual conviction of their truth. But yet such convictions are sometimes mistaken for saving convictions, and the affections flowing from them, for saving affections.

2. The extraordinary impressions which are made on the imaginations of some persons, in the visions and immediate strong impulses and suggestions that they have, as though they saw sights, and had words spoken to them, may, and often do beget a strong persuasion of the truth of invisible things. Though the general tendency of such things, in their final issue, is to draw men off from the word of God, and to cause them to reject the gospel, and to establish unbelief and Atheism; yet for the present, they may, and often do beget a confident persuasion of the truth of some things that are re-

vealed in the scriptures; however their confidence is founded in delusion, and so nothing worth. As for instance, if a person has by some invisible agent, immediately and strongly impressed on his imagination, the appearance of a bright light, and glorious form of a person seated on a throne, with great external majesty and beauty, uttering some remarkable words, with great force and energy; the person who is the subject of such an operation, may be from hence confident, that there are invisible agents, spiritual beings, from what he has experienced, knowing that he had no hand himself in this extraordinary effect, which he has experienced: And he may also be confident, that this is Christ whom he saw and heard speaking: And this may make him confident that there is a Christ, and that Christ reigns on a throne in heaven, as he saw him; and may be confident that the words which he heard him speak are true, &c....In the same manner, as the lying miracles of the Papists, may for the present, beget in the minds of the ignorant deluded people, a strong persuasion of the truth of many things declared in the New Testament. Thus when the images of Christ, in Popish churches, are on some extraordinary occasions, made by priestcraft to appear to the people as if they wept, and shed fresh blood, and moved, and uttered such and such words; the people may be verily persuaded that it is a miracle wrought by Christ himself; and from thence may be confident there is a Christ, and that what they are told of his death and sufferings, and resurrection, and ascension, and present government of the world is true; for they may look upon this miracle, as a certain evidence of all these things, and a kind of ocular demonstration of them. This may be the influence of these lying wonders for the present; though the general tendency of them is not to convince that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, but finally to promote Atheism. Even the intercourse which Satan has with witches, and their often experiencing his immediate power, has a tendency to convince them of the truth of some of the doctrines of religion; as particularly the reality of an invisible world, or world of spirits, contrary to the doctrine of the Sadducees. The general tendency of Satan's influence is

delusion: But yet he may mix some truth with his lies, that his lies may not be so easily discovered.

There are multitudes that are deluded with a counterfeit faith, from impressions on their imagination, in the manner which has been now spoken of. They say they know that there is a God, for they have seen him; they know that Christ is the Son of God, for they have seen him in his glory; they know that Christ died for sinners, for they have seen him hanging on the cross, and his blood running from his wounds; they know there is a heaven and a hell, for they have seen the misery of the damned souls in hell, and the glory of saints and angels in heaven (meaning some external representations, strongly impressed on their imagination;) they know that the scriptures are the word of God, and that such and such promises in particular are his word, for they have heard him speak them to them, they came to their minds suddenly and immediately from God, without their having any hand in it.

3. Persons may seem to have their belief of the truth of the things of religion greatly increased, when the foundation of it is only a persuasion they have received of their interest in them. They first by some means or other, take up a confidence, that if there be a Christ and heaven, they are theirs; and this prejudices them more in favor of the truth of them. When they hear of the great and glorious things of religion, it is with this notion, that all these things belong to them; and hence easily become confident that they are true; they look upon it to be greatly for their interest that they should be true. It is very obvious what a strong influence mens' interest and inclinations have on their judgments. While a natural man thinks, that if there be a heaven and hell, the latter, and not the former, belongs to him; then he will be hardly persuaded that there is a heaven or hell: But when he comes to be persuaded, that hell belongs only to other folks, and not to him, then he can easily allow the reality of hell, and cry out of others' senselessness and sottishness in neglecting means of escape from it: And being confident that he is a child of God, and that God has promised heaven to him,

he may seem strong in the faith of its reality, and may have a great zeal against that infidelity which denies it.

But I proceed to another distinguishing sign of gracious affections.

VI. Gracious affections are attended with evangelical humiliation.

Evangelical humiliation is a sense that a Christian has of his own utter insufficiency, despicableness, and odiousness, with an answerable frame of heart.

There is a distinction to be made between a legal and evangelical humiliation. The former is what men may be the subjects of, while they are yet in a state of nature, and have no gracious affection; the latter is peculiar to true saints: The former is from the common influence of the Spirit of God, assisting natural principles, and especially natural conscience; the latter is from the special influences of the Spirit of God, implanting and exercising supernatural and divine principles: The former is from the mind's being assisted to a greater sense of the things of religion, as to their natural properties and qualities, and particularly of the natural perfections of God, such as his greatness, terrible majesty, &c. which were manifested to the congregation of Israel, in giving the law at mount Sinai; the latter is from a sense of the transcendent beauty of divine things in their moral qualities: In the former, a sense of the awful greatness, and natural perfections of God, and of the strictness of his law, convinces men that they are exceeding sinful, and guilty, and exposed to the wrath of God, as it will wicked men and devils at the day of judgment; but they do not see their own odiousness on the account of sin; they do not see the hateful nature of sin; a sense of this is given in evangelical humiliation, by a discovery of the beauty of God's holiness and moral perfection. In a legal humiliation, men are made sensible that they are little and nothing before the great and terrible God, and that they are undone, and wholly insufficient to help themselves; as wicked men will be at the day of judgment: But they have not an answerable frame of heart, consisting in a disposition to abase themselves, and exalt God alone; this dis-

position is given only in evangelical humiliation, by overcoming the heart, and changing its inclination, by a discovery of God's holy beauty: In a legal humiliation, the conscience is convinced; as the consciences of all will be most perfectly at the day of judgment; but because there is no spiritual understanding, the will is not bowed, nor the inclination altered; this is done only in evangelical humiliation. In legal humiliation, men are brought to despair of helping themselves; in evangelical, they are brought voluntarily to deny and renounce themselves: In the former, they are subdued and forced to the ground; in the latter, they are brought sweetly to yield, and freely and with delight to prostrate themselves at the feet of God.

Legal humiliation has in it no spiritual good, nothing of the nature of true virtue; whereas evangelical humiliation is that wherein the excellent beauty of Christian grace does very much consist. Legal humiliation is useful, as a means in order to evangelical; as a common knowledge of the things of religion is a means requisite in order to spiritual knowledge. Men may be legally humbled and have no humility: As the wicked at the day of judgment will be thoroughly convinced that they have no righteousness, but are altogether sinful, and exceedingly guilty, and justly exposed to eternal damnation, and be fully sensible of their own helplessness, without the least mortification of the pride of their hearts: But the essence of evangelical humiliation consists in such humility, as becomes a creature, in itself exceeding sinful, under a dispensation of grace; consisting in a mean esteem of himself, as in himself nothing, and altogether contemptible and odious; attended with a mortification of a disposition to exalt himself, and a free renunciation of his own glory.

This is a great and most essential thing in true religion. The whole frame of the gospel, and every thing appertaining to the new covenant, and all God's dispensations towards fallen man, are calculated to bring to pass this effect in the hearts of men. They that are destitute of this, have no true religion, whatever profession they may make, and how high soever their religious affections may be, Hab. ii. 4. "Behold, his

soul which is lifted up, is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith;" i. e. he shall live by his faith on God's righteousness and grace, and not his own goodness and excellency. God has abundantly manifested in his word, that this is what he has a peculiar respect to in his saints, and that nothing is acceptable to him without it. Psalm xxxiv. 18. "The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. Psalm li. 17. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. Psalm cxxxviii. 6. Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly. Prov. iii. 34. He giveth grace unto the lowly. Isa. lvii. 15. Thus saith the "high and lofty one who inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy, I dwell in the high and holy place; with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones. Isa. lxvi. 1, 2. Thus saith the Lord, the heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word. Micah vi. 8. He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord thy God require of thee; but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? Mat. v. 3. Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of God. Mat. xviii. 3, 4. Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Mark x. 15. Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein." The centurion, that we have an account of, Luke vii. acknowledged that he was not worthy that Christ should enter under his roof, and that he was not worthy to come to him. See the manner of the woman's coming to Christ, that was a sinner, Luke vii. 37, &c. "And behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with

tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head." She did not think the hair of her head, which is the natural crown and glory of a woman, (1 Cor. xi. 15) too good to wipe the feet of Christ withal. Jesus most graciously accepted her, and says to her, "thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace." The woman of Canaan submitted to Christ, in his saying, "it is not meet to take the children's bread and to cast it to dogs," and did as it were own that she was worthy to be called a dog; whereupon Christ says unto her, "O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee, even as thou wilt. Mat. xv. 26, 27, 28. The prodigal son said, I will arise and go to my father, and I will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants. Luke xv. 18, &c. See also Luke xviii. 9, &c. And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others, &c. The publican standing afar off, would not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: For every one that exalteth himself, shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted. Mat. xxviii. 9. And they came, and held him by the feet, and worshipped him. Col. iii. 12. Put ye on, as the elect of God, humbleness of mind. Ezek. xx. 41, 43. I will accept you with your sweet savor, when I bring you out from the people, &c. And there shall ye remember your ways, and all your doings, wherein ye have been defiled, and ye shall loath yourselves in your own sight, for all your evils that ye have committed. Chap. xxxvi. 26, 27, 31. A new heart also will I give unto you....and I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, &c. Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loath yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities, and for your abominations. Chap. xvi. 63. That thou mayst remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord. Job xlii. I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

As we would therefore make the holy scriptures our rule, in judging of the nature of true religion, and judging of our own religious qualifications and state; it concerns us greatly to look at this humiliation, as one of the most essential things pertaining to true Christianity.* This is the principal part of the great Christian duty of selfdenial. That duty consists in two things, viz. *first*, In a man's denying his worldly inclinations, and in forsaking and renouncing all worldly objects and enjoyments; and, *secondly*, In denying his natural selfexaltation, and renouncing his own dignity and glory, and in being emptied of himself; so that he does freely and from his very heart, as it were renounce himself, and annihilate himself. Thus the Christian doth in evangelical humiliation. And this latter is the greatest and most difficult part of selfdenial: Although they always go together, and one never truly is, where the other is not; yet natural men can come much nearer to the former than the latter. Many Anchorites and Recluses have abandoned (though without any true mortification) the wealth, and pleasures, and common enjoyments of the world, who were far from renouncing their own dignity and righteousness; they never denied themselves for Christ, but only sold one lust to feed another, sold a beastly lust to pamper a devilish one; and so were never the better, but their latter end was worse than their beginning; they turned out one black devil, to let in seven white ones, that were worse than the first, though of a fairer countenance. It is inexpressible, and almost inconceivable, how strong a selfrighteous, selfexalting disposition is naturally in man; and what he will not do and suffer to feed and gratify it; and what lengths have been gone in a seeming selfdenial in other res-

* Calvin, in his Institutions, Book II. chap. 2. § 11, says, "I was always exceedingly pleased with that saying of Chrysostom, "The foundation of our philosophy is humility;" and yet more pleased with that of Augustine. "As, says he, the rhetorician being asked, what was the first thing in the rules of eloquence, he answered, pronunciation; what was the second, pronunciation; what was the third, still he answered, pronunciation. So if you shall ask me concerning the precepts of the Christian religion, I would answer, firstly, secondly, and thirdly, and forever, humility."

pects, by Essenes and Pharisees among the Jews, and by Papists, many sects of heretics, and enthusiasts, among professing Christians; and by many Mahometans; and by Pythagorean philosophers, and others among the Heathen; and all to do sacrifice to this Moloch of spiritual pride or self-righteousness; and that they may have something wherein to exalt themselves before God, and above their fellow creatures.

That humiliation which has been spoken of, is what all the most glorious hypocrites, who make the most splendid shew of mortification to the world, and high religious affection, do grossly fail in. Were it not that this is so much insisted on in scripture, as a most essential thing in true grace, one would be tempted to think that many of the heathen philosophers were truly gracious, in whom was so bright an appearance of many virtues, and also great illuminations, and inward fervors and elevations of mind, as though they were truly the subjects of divine illapses and heavenly communications.* It

* "Albeit the Pythagoreans were thus famous for Judaic mysterious wisdom, and many moral, as well as natural accomplishments, yet were they not exempted from boasting and pride; which was indeed a vice most epidemic, and as it were congenial, among all the philosophers; but in a more particular manner, among the Pythagoreans. So Hornius Hist. Philosoph. L. 3. chap xi. The manners of the Pythagoreans were not free from boasting. They were all such as abounded in the sense and commendation of their own excellencies, and boasting even almost to the degree of immodesty and impudence, as great Heinsius, ad Horat. has rightly observed. Thus indeed does proud nature delight to walk in the sparks of its own fire. And although many of these old philosophers could, by the strength of their own lights and heats, together with some common elevations and raisures of spirit, (peradventure from a more than ordinary, though not special and saving assistance of the Spirit) abandon many grosser vices; yet they were all deeply immersed in that miserable cursed abyss of spiritual pride: So that all their natural, and moral, and philosophic attainments, didf eed, nourish, strengthen and render most inveterate, this hell bred pest of their hearts. Yea, those of them that seemed most modest, as the Academics, who professed they knew nothing, and the Cynics, who greatly decried, both in words and habits, the pride of others, yet even they abounded in the most notorious and visible pride. So connatural and morally essential to corrupt nature, is this envenomed root, fountain, and plague of spiritual pride; especially where there is any natural,

is true, that many hypocrites make great pretences to humility, as well as other graces; and very often there is nothing whatsoever which they make a higher profession of. They endeavor to make a great shew of humility in speech and behavior; but they commonly make bungling work of it, though glorious work in their own eyes. They cannot find out what a humble speech and behavior is, or how to speak and act so that there may indeed be a savor of Christian humility in what they say and do: That sweet humble air and mien is beyond their art, being not led by the Spirit, or naturally guided to a behavior becoming holy humility, by the vigor of a lowly spirit within them. And therefore they have no other way, many of them, but only to be much in declaring that they be humble, and telling how they were humbled to the dust at such and such times, and abounding in very bad expressions which they use about themselves; such as, "I am the least of all saints, I am a poor vile creature, I am not worthy of the least mercy, or that God should look upon me! Oh, I have a dreadful wicked heart! My heart is worse than the devil! Oh, this cursed heart of mine," &c. Such expressions are very often used, not with a heart that is broken, not with spiritual mourning, not with the tears of her that washed Jesus's feet, not as "remembering and being confounded, and never opening their mouth more because of their shame, when God is pacified," as the expression is, Ezek. xvi. 63, but with a light air, with smiles in the countenance, or with a pharisaical affectation: And we must believe that they are thus humble, and see themselves so vile, upon the credit of their say so; for there is nothing appears in them of any savor of humility, in the manner of their deportment and deeds that they do. There are many that are full of expressions of their own vileness, who yet expect to be looked upon as eminent and bright saints by others, as their due; and it is dangerous for any, so much as to hint the contrary,

moral, or philosophic excellence to feed the same. Whence, Austin rightly judged all these philosophic virtues to be but splendid sins. *Gale's Court of the Gentiles*, Part II. B. ii. chap. x. § 17.

or to carry it towards them any otherwise, than as if we looked upon them as some of the chief of Christians. There are many that are much in crying out of their wicked hearts, and their great short comings, and unprofitableness, and speaking as though they looked on themselves as the meanest of the saints; who yet, if a minister should seriously tell them the same things in private, and should signify, that he feared they were very low and weak Christians, and thought they had reason solemnly to consider of their great barrenness and unprofitableness, and falling so much short of many others, it would be more than they could digest; they would think themselves highly injured; and there would be a danger of a rooted prejudice in them against such a minister.

There are some that are abundant in talking against legal doctrines, legal preaching, and a legal spirit, who do but little understand the thing they talk against. A legal spirit is a more subtle thing than they imagine; it is too subtle for them. It lurks, and operates, and prevails in their hearts, and they are most notoriously guilty of it, at the same time, when they are inveighing against it. So far as a man is not emptied of himself, and of his own righteousness and goodness, in whatever form or shape, so far he is of a legal spirit. A spirit of pride of man's own righteousness, morality, holiness, affection, experience, faith, humiliation, or any goodness whatsoever, is a legal spirit. It was no pride in Adam before the fall, to be of a legal spirit; because of his circumstances, he might seek acceptance by his own righteousness. But a legal spirit in a fallen, sinful creature, can be nothing else but spiritual pride; and reciprocally, a spiritually proud spirit is a legal spirit. There is no man living that is lifted up with a conceit of his own experiences and discoveries, and upon the account of them glisters in his own eyes, but what trusts in his experiences, and makes a righteousness of them; however he may use humble terms, and speak of his experiences as of the great things God has done for him, and it may be calls upon others to glorify God for them; yet he that is proud of his experiences, arrogates something to himself, as though his experiences were some dignity of his. And if he looks on them

as his own dignity, he necessarily thinks that God looks on them so too; for he necessarily thinks his own opinion of them to be true; and consequently judges that God looks on them as he does; and so unavoidably imagines that God looks on his experiences as a dignity in him, as he looks on them himself; and that he glisters as much in God's eyes, as he does in his own. And thus he trusts in what is inherent in him, to make him shine in God's sight, and recommend him to God: And with this encouragement he goes before God in prayer; and this makes him expect much from God; and this makes him think that Christ loves him, and that he is willing to clothe him with his righteousness; because he supposes that he is taken with his experiences and graces. And this is a high degree of living on his own righteousness; and such persons are in the high road to hell. Poor deluded wretches, who think they look so glistering in God's eyes, when they are a smoke in his nose, and are many of them more odious to him, than the most impure beast in Sodom, that makes no pretence to religion! To do as these do, is to live upon experiences, according to the true notion of it; and not to do as those, who only make use of spiritual experiences, as evidences of a state of grace, and in that way receive hope and comfort from them.

There is a sort of men, who indeed abundantly cry down works, and cry up faith in opposition to works, and set up themselves very much as evangelical persons, in opposition to those that are of a legal spirit, and make a fair show of advancing Christ and the gospel, and the way of free grace; who are indeed some of the greatest enemies to the gospel way of free grace, and the most dangerous opposers of pure humble Christianity.

There is a pretended great humiliation, and being dead to the law, and emptied of self, which is one of the biggest and most elated things in the world. Some there are, who have made great profession of experience of a thorough work of the law on their hearts, and of being brought fully off from works; whose conversation has savored most of a selfrighteous spirit of any that ever I had opportunity to observe.

And some who think themselves quite emptied of themselves, and are confident that they are abased in the dust, are full as they can hold with the glory of their own humility, and lifted up to heaven with an high opinion of their abasement. Their humility is a swelling, selfconceited, confident, showy, noisy, assuming humility. It seems to be the nature of spiritual pride to make men conceited and ostentatious of their humility. This appears in that first born of pride among the children of men, that would be called his holiness, even the man of sin, that exalts himself above all that is called God or is worshipped; he styles himself Servant of servants; and to make a shew of humility, washes the feet of a number of poor men at his inauguration.

For persons to be truly emptied of themselves, and to be poor in spirit, and broken in heart, is quite another thing, and has other effects, than many imagine. It is astonishing how greatly many are deceived about themselves as to this matter, imagining themselves most humble, when they are most proud, and their behavior is really the most haughty. The deceitfulness of the heart of man appears in no one thing so much as this of spiritual pride and selfrighteousness. The subtilty of Satan appears in its height, in his managing of persons with respect to this sin. And perhaps one reason may be, that here he has most experience; he knows the way of its coming in; he is acquainted with the secret springs of it: It was his own sin....Experience gives vast advantage in leading souls, either in good or evil.

But though spiritual pride be so subtle and secret an iniquity, and commonly appears under a pretext of great humility; yet there are two things by which it may (perhaps universally and surely) be discovered and distinguished.

The first thing is this; he that is under the prevalence of this distemper, is apt to think highly of his attainments in religion, as comparing himself with others. It is natural for him to fall into that thought of himself, that he is an eminent saint, that he is very high amongst the saints, and has distinguishingly good and great experiences. That is the secret language of his heart, Luke xviii. 11. "God, I thank thee

that I am not as other men." And Isa. lxv. 5. "I am holier than thou." Hence such are apt to put themselves forward among God's people, and as it were to take a high seat among them, as if there was no doubt of it but it belonged to them. They, as it were, naturally do that which Christ condemns, Luke xiv. 7, &c. take the highest room. This they do, by being forward to take upon them the place and business of the chief; to guide, teach, direct, and manage; "they are confident that they are guides to the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, instructors of the foolish, teachers of babes, Rom. ii. 19, 20." It is natural for them to take it for granted, that it belongs to them to do the part of dictators and masters in matters of religion; and so they implicitly affect to be called of men Rabbi, which is by interpretation Master, as the Pharisees did, Matth. xxiii. 6, 7. *i. e.* they are yet apt to expect that others should regard them, and yield to them, as masters in matters of religion.*

But he whose heart is under the power of Christian humility, is of a contrary disposition. If the scriptures are at all to be relied on, such an one is apt to think his attainments in religion to be comparatively mean, and to esteem himself low among the saints, and one of the least of saints. Humility, or true lowliness of mind, disposes persons to think others better than themselves, Phil. ii. 3. "In lowliness of mind, let each esteem others better than themselves." Hence they are apt to think the lowest room belongs to them, and their inward disposition naturally leads them to obey that precept of our Saviour, Luke xiv. 10. It is not natural to them to take it upon them to do the part of teachers; but on the contrary, they are disposed to think that they are not the persons, that others are fitter for it than they; as it was with Moses and Jeremiah (Exod. iii. 11. Jer. i. 6.) though they were such eminent saints, and of great knowledge. It is not natural to

* "There be two things wherein it appears that a man has only common gifts, and no inward principle; 1. These gifts ever puff up, and make a man something in his own eyes, as the Corinthian knowledge did, and many a private man thinks himself fit to be a minister." Shepard's Parable, Part I. p. 181, 182.

them to think that it belongs to them to teach, but to be taught: They are much more eager to hear, and to receive instruction from others, than to dictate to others, Jam. i. 19. "Be ye swift to hear, slow to speak." And when they do speak, it is not natural to them to speak with a bold, masterly air; but humility disposes them rather to speak, trembling. Hos. xiii. 1. "When Ephraim spake, trembling, he exalted himself in Israel; but when he offended in Baal, he died." They are not apt to assume authority, and to take upon them to be chief managers and masters; but rather to be subject to others; Jam. iii. 1, 2. "Be not many masters." 1 Pet. v. 5. "All of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility. Eph. v. 21. Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God."

There are some persons' experiences that naturally work that way, to make them think highly of them; and they do often themselves speak of their experiences as very great and extraordinary; they freely speak of the great things they have met with. This may be spoken and meant in a good sense. In one sense, every degree of saving mercy is a great thing: It is indeed a thing great, yea, infinitely great, for God to bestow the least crumb of children's bread on such dogs as we are in ourselves; and the more humble a person is that hopes that God has bestowed such mercy on him, the more apt will he be to call it a great thing that he has met with in this sense. But if by great things which they have experienced, they mean comparatively great spiritual experiences, or great compared with others' experiences, or beyond what is ordinary, which is evidently oftentimes the case; then for a person to say, I have met with great things, is the very same thing as to say, I am an eminent saint, and have more grace than ordinary: For to have great experiences, if the experiences be true and worth the telling of, is the same thing as to have great grace: There is no true experience, but the exercise of grace; and exactly according to the degree of true experience, is the degree of grace and holiness. The persons that talk thus about their experiences, when they give an account of them, expect that others should admire

them. Indeed they do not call it boasting to talk after this manner about their experiences, nor do they look upon it as any sign of pride; because they say, "they know that it was not they that did it, it was free grace, they are things that God has done for them, they would acknowledge the great mercy God has shown them, and not make light of it." But so it was with the Pharisee that Christ tells us of, Luke xviii. He in words gave God the glory of making him to differ from other men; God, I thank thee, says he, that I am not as other men.* Their verbally ascribing it to the grace of God, that they are holier than other saints, does not hinder their forwardness to think so highly of their holiness, being a sure evidence of the pride and vanity of their minds. If they were under the influence of an humble spirit, their attainments in religion would not be so apt to shine in their own eyes, nor would they be so much in admiring their own beauty. The Christians that are really the most eminent saints, and therefore have the most excellent experiences, and are the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, humble themselves as a little child, Matth. viii. 4, because they look on themselves as but little children in grace, and their attainments to be but the attainments of babes in Christ, and are astonished at, and ashamed of the low degrees of their love, and their thankfulness, and their little knowledge of God. Moses, when he had been conversing with God in the mount, and his face shone so bright in the eyes of others as to dazzle their eyes, wist not that his face shone. There are some persons that go by the name of high professors, and some will own themselves to be high professors; but eminently humble saints, that will shine brightest in heaven, are not at all apt to profess high. I do not believe there is an eminent saint in the world that is a high professor. Such will be much more likely to profess them-

* Calvin, in his Institutions, B. III. chap. xii. § 7, speaking of this Pharisee, observes, "That in his outward confession, he acknowledges that the righteousness that he has, is the gift of God: But (says he) because he trusts that he is righteous, he goes away out of the presence of God, unacceptable and odious."

selves to be least of all saints, and to think that every saint's attainments and experiences are higher than his.*

Such is the nature of grace, and of true spiritual light, that they naturally dispose the saints in the present state, to look upon their grace and goodness little, and their deformity great. And they that have the most grace and spiritual light, of any in this world, have most of this disposition. As will appear most clear and evident to any one that soberly and thoroughly weighs the nature and reason of things, and considers the things following.

That grace and holiness is worthy to be called little, that is, little in comparison of what it ought to be. And so it seems to one that is truly gracious: For such an one has his eye upon the rule of his duty; a conformity to that is what he aims at; it is what his soul struggles and reaches after; and it is by that that he estimates and judges of what he does, and what he has. To a gracious soul, and especially to one eminently gracious, that holiness appears little, which is little of what it should be; little of what he sees infinite reason for, and obligation to. If his holiness appears to him to be at a vast distance from this, it naturally appears despicable in his eyes, and not worthy to be mentioned as any beauty or amiableness in him. For the like reason as a hungry man natur-

* Luther, as his words are cited by Rutherford, in his Display of the spiritual Antichrist, p. 143, 144, says thus, "So is the life of a Christian, that he that has begun, seems to himself to have nothing; but strives and presses forward, that he may apprehend: Whence Paul says, I count not myself to have apprehended. For indeed nothing is more pernicious to a believer, than that presumption, that he has already apprehended, and has no further need of seeking. Hence also many fall back, and pine away in spiritual security and slothfulness. So Bernard says, "To stand still in God's way, is to go back." Wherefore this remains to him that he has begun to be a Christian, to think that he is not yet a Christian, but to seek that he may be a Christian, that he may glory with Paul, "I am not, but I desire to be;" a Christian not yet finished, but only in his beginnings. Therefore he is not a Christian, that is a Christian, that is, he that thinks himself a finished Christian, and is not sensible how he falls short. We reach after heaven, but are not in heaven. Woe to him that is wholly renewed, that is, that thinks himself to be so. That man, without doubt, has never so much as begun to be renewed, nor did he ever taste what it is to be a Christian."

ally accounts that which is set before him, but a little food, a small matter, not worth mentioning, that is nothing in comparison of his appetite. Or as the child of a great prince, that is jealous for the honor of his father, and beholds the respect which men shew him, naturally looks on that honor and respect very little, and not worthy to be regarded, which is nothing in comparison of that which the dignity of his father requires.

But that is the nature of true grace and spiritual light, that it opens to a person's view the infinite reason there is that he should be holy in a high degree. And the more grace he has, the more this is opened to view, the greater sense he has of the infinite excellency and glory of the divine Being, and of the infinite dignity of the person of Christ, and the boundless length and breadth, and depth and height, of the love of Christ to sinners. And as grace increases, the field opens more and more to a distant view, until the soul is swallowed up with the vastness of the object, and the person is astonished to think how much it becomes him to love this God, and this glorious Redeemer, that has so loved man, and how little he does love. And so the more he apprehends, the more the smallness of his grace and love appears strange and wonderful: And therefore is more ready to think that others are beyond him. For wondering at the littleness of his own grace, he can scarcely believe that so strange a thing happens to other saints: It is amazing to him, that one that is really a child of God, and that has actually received the saving benefits of that unspeakable love of Christ, should love no more: And he is apt to look upon it as a thing peculiar to himself, a strange and exempt instance; for he sees only the outside of other Christians, but he sees his own inside.

Here the reader may possibly object, that love to God is really increased in proportion as the knowledge of God is increased; and therefore how should an increase of knowledge in a saint make his love appear less, in comparison of what is known? To which I answer, that although grace and the love of God in the saints, be answerable to the degree of knowledge or sight of God; yet it is not in proportion to the

object seen and known. The soul of a saint, by having something of God opened to sight, is convinced of much more than is seen. There is something that is seen, that is wonderful; and that sight brings with it a strong conviction of something vastly beyond, that is not immediately seen. So that the soul, at the same time, is astonished at its ignorance, and that it knows so little, as well as that it loves so little. And as the soul, in a spiritual view, is convinced of infinitely more in the object, yet beyond sight; so it is convinced of the capacity of the soul, of knowing vastly more, if the clouds and darkness were but removed. Which causes the soul, in the enjoyment of a spiritual view, to complain greatly of spiritual ignorance, and want of love, and to long and reach after more knowledge and more love.

Grace and the love of God in the most eminent saints in this world, is truly very little in comparison of what it ought to be. Because the highest love that ever any attain to in this life, is poor, cold, exceeding low, and not worthy to be named in comparison of what our obligations appear to be, from the joint consideration of these two things, viz. 1. The reason God has given us to love him, in the manifestations he has made of his infinite glory, in his word, and in his works; and particularly in the gospel of his Son, and what he has done for sinful man by him. And, 2. The capacity there is in the soul of man, by those intellectual faculties which God has given it, of seeing and understanding these reasons, which God has given us to love him. How small indeed is the love of the most eminent saint on earth, in comparison of what these things, jointly considered, do require! And this grace tends to convince men of this, and especially eminent grace; for grace is of the nature of light, and brings truth to view. And therefore he that has much grace, apprehends much more than others that great height to which his love ought to ascend; and he sees better than others, how little a way he has risen towards that height. And therefore estimating his love by the whole height of his duty, hence it appears astonishingly little and low in his eyes.

And the eminent saint, having such a conviction of the high degree in which he ought to love God, this shews him, not only the littleness of his grace, but the greatness of his remaining corruption. In order to judge how much corruption or sin we have remaining in us, we must take our measure from that height to which the rule of our duty extends: The whole of the distance we are at from that height, is sin: For failing of duty is sin; otherwise our duty is not our duty, and by how much the more we fall short of our duty, so much the more sin have we. Sin is no other than disagreeableness, in a moral agent, to the law or rule of his duty. And therefore the degree of sin is to be judged of by the rule: So much disagreeableness to the rule, so much sin, whether it be in defect or excess. Therefore if men, in their love to God, do not come up half way to that height which duty requires, then they have more corruption in their hearts than grace; because there is more goodness wanting, than is there: And all that is wanting is sin: It is an abominable defect; and appears so to the saints; especially those that are eminent; it appears exceeding abominable to them, that Christ should be loved so little, and thanked so little for his dying love: It is in their eyes hateful ingratitude.

And then the increase of grace has a tendency another way, to cause the saints to think their deformity vastly more than their goodness: It not only tends to convince them that their corruption is much greater than their goodness, which is indeed the case; but it also tends to cause the deformity that there is in the least sin, or the least degree of corruption, to appear so great as vastly to outweigh all the beauty there is in their greatest holiness; for this also is indeed the case. For the least sin against an infinite God, has an infinite hatefulness or deformity in it; but the highest degree of holiness in a creature, has not an infinite loveliness in it: And therefore the loveliness of it is as nothing, in comparison of the deformity of the least sin. That every sin has infinite deformity and hatefulness in it, is most demonstrably evident; because what the evil, or iniquity, or hatefulness of sin consists in, is the violating of an obligation, or the being or doing con-

trary to what we should be or do, or are obliged to. And therefore by how much the greater the obligation is that is violated, so much the greater is the iniquity and hatefulness of the violation. But certainly our obligation to love and honor any being is in some proportion to his loveliness and honorableness, or to his worthiness to be loved and honored by us; which is the same thing. We are surely under greater obligation to love a more lovely being, than a less lovely; and if a Being be infinitely lovely or worthy to be loved by us, then our obligations to love him are infinitely great; and therefore, whatever is contrary to this love, has in it infinite iniquity, deformity, and unworthiness. But on the other hand, with respect to our holiness or love to God, there is not an infinite worthiness in that. The sin of the creature against God, is ill deserving and hateful in proportion to the distance there is between God and the creature: The greatness of the object, and the meanness and inferiority of the subject, aggravates it. But it is the reverse with regard to the worthiness of the respect of the creature to God; it is worthless, and not worthy, in proportion to the meanness of the subject. So much the greater the distance between God and the creature, so much the less is the creature's respect worthy of God's notice or regard. The great degree of superiority increases the obligation on the inferior to regard the superior; and so makes the want of regard more hateful: But the great degree of inferiority diminishes the worth of the regard of the inferior; because the more he is inferior, the less he is worthy of notice; the less he is, the less is what he can offer worth; for he can offer no more than himself, in offering his best respect; and therefore as he is little, and little worth, so is his respect little worth. And the more a person has of true grace and spiritual light, the more will it appear thus to him; the more will he appear to himself infinitely deformed by reason of sin, and the less will the goodness that is in his grace, or good experience, appear in proportion to it. For indeed it is nothing to it; it is less than a drop to the ocean; for finite bears no proportion at all to that which is infinite. But the more a person has of spiritual light, the more do

things appear to him, in this respect, as they are indeed... Hence it most demonstrably appears, that true grace is of that nature, that the more a person has of it, with remaining corruption, the less does his goodness and holiness appear, in proportion to his deformity; and not only to his past deformity, but to his present deformity, in the sin that now appears in his heart, and in the abominable defects of his highest and best affections, and brightest experiences.

The nature of many high and religious affections, and great discoveries (as they are called) in many persons that I have been acquainted with, is to hide and cover over the corruption of their hearts, and to make it seem to them as if all their sin was gone, and to leave them without complaints of any hateful evil left in them; (though it may be they cry out much of their past unworthiness) a sure and certain evidence that their discoveries (as they call them) are darkness and not light. It is darkness that hides men's pollution and deformity; but light let into the heart discovers it, searches it out in its secret corners, and makes it plainly to appear; especially that penetrating, all searching light of God's holiness and glory. It is true, that saving discoveries may for the present hide corruption in one sense; they restrain the positive exercises of it, such as malice, envy, covetousness, lasciviousness, murmuring, &c. but they bring corruption to light, in that which is privative, viz. that there is no more love, no more humility, no more thankfulness. Which defects appear most hateful in the eyes of those who have the most eminent exercises of grace; and are very burdensome, and cause the saints to cry out of their leanness, and odious pride and ingratitude. And whatever positive exercises of corruption at any time arise, and mingle themselves with eminent actings of grace, grace will exceedingly magnify the view of them, and render their appearance far more heinous and horrible.

The more eminent saints are, and the more they have of the light of heaven in their souls, the more do they appear to themselves, as the most eminent saints in this world do, to the saints and angels in heaven. How can we rationally sup-

pose the most eminent saints on earth appear to them, if beheld any otherwise, than covered over with the righteousness of Christ, and their deformities swallowed up and hid in the coruscation of the beams of his abundant glory and love? How can we suppose our most ardent love and praises appear to them, that do behold the beauty and glory of God without a vail? How does our highest thankfulness for the dying love of Christ appear to them, who see Christ as he is, who know as they are known, and see the glory of the person of him that died, and the wonders of his dying love, without any cloud of darkness? And how do they look on the deepest reverence and humility, with which worms of the dust on earth approach that infinite Majesty which they behold? Do they appear great to them, or so much as worthy of the name of reverence and humility, in those that they see to be at such an infinite distance from that great and holy God, in whose glorious presence they are? The reason why the highest attainments of the saints on earth appear so mean to them, is because they dwell in the light of God's glory, and see God as he is. And it is in this respect with the saints on earth, as it is with the saints in heaven, in proportion as they are more eminent in grace.

I would not be understood, that the saints on earth have in all respects the worst opinion of themselves, when they have most of the exercise of grace. In many respects it is otherwise. With respect to the positive exercises of corruption, they may appear to themselves freest and best when grace is most in exercise, and worst when the actings of grace are lowest. And when they compare themselves with themselves at different times, they may know, when grace is in lively exercise, that it is better with them than it was before (though before, in the time of it, they did not see so much badness as they see now) and when afterwards they sink again in the frame of their minds, they may know that they sink, and have a new argument of their great remaining corruption, and a rational conviction of a greater vileness than they saw before; and many have more of a sense of guilt, and a kind of legal sense of their sinfulness by far, than when

in the lively exercise of grace. But yet it is true, and demonstrable from the forementioned considerations, that the children of God never have so much of a sensible and spiritual conviction of their deformity, and so great, and quick, and abasing a sense of their present vileness and odiousness, as when they are highest in the exercise of true and pure grace; and never are they so much disposed to set themselves low among Christians as then. And thus he that is greatest in the kingdom, or most eminent in the church of Christ, is the same that humbles himself, as the least infant among them; agreeable to that great saying of Christ, Mat. xviii. 4.

A true saint may know that he has some true grace: And the more grace there is, the more easily is it known; as was observed and proved before. But yet it does not follow, that an eminent saint is easily sensible that he is an eminent saint, when compared with others. I will not deny that it is possible, that he that has much grace, and is an eminent saint, may know it. But he will not be apt to know it; it will not be a thing obvious to him: That he is better than others, and has higher experiences and attainments, is not a foremost thought; nor is it that which, from time to time readily offers itself; it is a thing that is not in his way, but lies far out of sight; he must take pains to convince himself of it; there will be need of a great command of reason, and a high degree of strictness and care in arguing, to convince himself. And if he be rationally convinced by a very strict consideration of his own experiences, compared with the great appearances of low degrees of grace in some other saints, it will hardly seem real to him, that he has more grace than they; and he will be apt to lose the conviction that he has by pains obtained: Nor will it seem at all natural to him to act upon that supposition. And this may be laid down as an infallible thing, "That the person who is apt to think that he, as compared with others, is a very eminent saint, much distinguished in Christian experience, in whom this is a first thought, that rises of itself, and naturally offers itself; he is certainly mistaken; he is no eminent saint, but under the great prevail-

ings of a proud and selfrighteous spirit." And if this be habitual with the man, and is steadily the prevailing temper of his mind, he is no saint at all; he has not the least degree of any true Christian experience; so surely as the word of God is true.

And that sort of experiences that appears to be of that tendency, and is found from time to time to have that effect, to elevate the subject of them with a great conceit of these experiences, is certainly vain and delusive. Those supposed discoveries that naturally blow up the person with an admiration of the eminency of his discoveries, and fill him with conceit that now he has seen, and knows more than most other Christians, have nothing of the nature of true spiritual light in them. All true spiritual knowledge is of that nature, that the more a person has of it, the more is he sensible of his own ignorance; as is evident by 1 Cor. viii. 2. "He that thinketh he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know." Agur, when he had a great discovery of God, and sense of the wonderful height of his glory, and of his marvellous works, and cries out of his greatness and incomprehensibleness; at the same time, had the deepest sense of his brutish ignorance, and looked upon himself the most ignorant of all the saints, Prov. xxx. 2, 3, 4. "Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man. I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy. Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? Who hath gathered the wind in his fists? Who hath bound the waters in a garment? Who hath established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?"

For a man to be highly conceited of his spiritual and divine knowledge, is for him to be wise in his own eyes, if any thing is. And therefore it comes under those prohibitions, Prov. iii. 7. "Be not wise in thine own eyes." Rom. xii. 16. "Be not wise in your own conceits;" and brings men under that woe, Isa. v. 21. "Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight." Those that are thus wise in their own eyes, are some of the least

likely to get good of any in the world. Experience shews the truth of that, Prov. xxvi. 12....Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? There is more hope of a fool than of him."

To this some may object, that the Psalmist, when we must suppose that he was in a holy frame, speaks of his knowledge as eminently great, and far greater than that of other saints, Psal. cxix. 99, 100. "I have more understanding than all my teachers: For thy testimonies are my meditation: I understand more than the ancients: Because I keep thy precepts."

To this I answer two things:

(1.) There is no restraint to be laid upon the Spirit of God, as to what he shall reveal to a prophet, for the benefit of his church, who is speaking or writing under immediate inspiration. The Spirit of God may reveal to such an one, and dictate to him, to declare to others secret things, that otherwise would be hard, yea impossible for him to find out. As he may reveal to him mysteries, that otherwise would be above the reach of his reason; or things in a distant place, that he cannot see; or future events, that it would be impossible for him to know and declare, if they were not extraordinarily revealed to him; so the Spirit of God might reveal to David this distinguishing benefit he had received, by conversing much with God's testimonies; and use him as his instrument to record it for the benefit of others, to excite them to the like duty, and to use the same means to gain knowledge. Nothing can be gathered concerning the natural tendency of the ordinary gracious influences of the Spirit of God, from that, that David declares of his distinguishing knowledge under the extraordinary influences of God's Spirit, immediately dictating to him the divine mind by inspiration, and using David as his instrument to write what he pleased for the benefit of his church; any more than we can reasonably argue, that it is the natural tendency of grace to incline men to curse others, and wish the most dreadful misery to them that can be thought of, because David, under inspira-

tion, often curses others, and prays that such misery may come upon them.

(2.) It is not certain that the knowledge David here speaks of, is spiritual knowledge, wherein holiness does fundamentally consist. But it may be that greater revelation which God made to him of the Messiah, and the things of his future kingdom, and the far more clear and extensive knowledge that he had of the mysteries and doctrines of the gospel, than others; as a reward for his keeping God's testimonies. In this, it is apparent by the book of Psalms, that David far exceeded all that had gone before him.

Secondly, Another thing that is an infallible sign of spiritual pride, is persons being apt to think highly of their humility. False experiences are commonly attended with a counterfeit humility. And it is the very nature of a counterfeit humility, to be highly conceited of itself. False religious affections have generally that tendency, especially when raised to a great height, to make persons think that their humility is great, and accordingly to take much notice of their great attainments in this respect, and admire them. But eminently gracious affections (I scruple not to say it) are evermore of a contrary tendency, and have universally a contrary effect in those that have them. They indeed make them very sensible what reason there is that they should be deeply humbled, and cause them earnestly to thirst and long after it; but they make their present humility, or that which they have already attained to, to appear small; and their remaining pride great, and exceedingly abominable.

The reason why a proud person should be apt to think his humility great, and why a very humble person should think his humility small, may be easily seen, if it be considered, that it is natural for persons, in judging of the degree of their own humiliation, to take their measure from that which they esteem their proper height, or the dignity wherein they properly stand. That may be great humiliation in one, that is no humiliation at all in another; because the degree of honorableness, or considerableness wherein each does properly stand, is very different. For some great man, to stoop

to loose the latchet of the shoes of another great man, his equal, or to wash his feet, would be taken notice of as an act of abasement in him; and he, being sensible of his own dignity, would look upon it so himself. But if a poor slave is seen stooping to unloose the shoes of a great prince, nobody will take any notice of this, as any act of humiliation in him, or token of any great degree of humility: Nor would the slave himself, unless he be horribly proud and ridiculously conceited of himself: And if after he had done it, he should, in his talk and behavior, shew that he thought his abasement great in it, and had his mind much upon it, as an evidence of his being very humble; would not every body cry out upon him, "Whom do you think yourself to be, that you should think this that you have done such a deep humiliation?" This would make it plain to a demonstration, that this slave was swollen with a high degree of pride and vanity of mind, as much as if he declared in plain terms, "I think myself to be some great one." And the matter is no less plain and certain, when worthless, vile, and loathsome worms of the dust, are apt to put such a construction on their acts of abasement before God; and to think it a token of great humility in them that they, under their affections, can find themselves so willing to acknowledge themselves to be so mean and unworthy, and to behave themselves as those that are so inferior. The very reason why such outward acts, and such inward exercises, look like great abasement in such an one, is because he has a high conceit of himself. Whereas if he thought of himself more justly, these things would appear nothing to him, and his humility in them worthy of no regard; but would rather be astonished at his pride, that one so infinitely despicable and vile is brought no lower before God.....When he says in his heart, "This is a great act of humiliation; it is certainly a sign of great humility in me, that I should feel thus and do so;" his meaning is, "This is great humility for me, for such a one as I, that am so considerable and worthy." He considers how low he is now brought, and compares this with the height of dignity on which he in his heart thinks he properly stands, and the distance appears very great, and he calls

it all mere humility, and as such admires it. Whereas, in him that is truly humble, and really sees his own vileness and loathsomeness before God, the distance appears the other way. When he is brought lowest of all, it does not appear to him, that he is brought below his proper station, but that he is not come to it; he appears to himself yet vastly above it, he longs to get lower, that he may come to it, but appears at a great distance from it. And this distance he calls pride. And therefore his pride appears great to him, and not his humility. For although he is brought much lower than he used to be, yet it does not appear to him worthy of the name of humiliation, for him that is so infinitely mean and detestable, to come down to a place, which, though it be lower than what he used to assume, is yet vastly higher than what is proper for him. As men would hardly count it worthy of the name of humility, in a contemptible slave, that formerly affected to be a prince, to have his spirit so far brought down, as to take the place of a nobleman; when this is still so far above his proper station.

All men in the world, in judging of the degree of their own and others' humility, as appearing in any act of theirs, consider two things, viz. the real degree of dignity they stand in; and the degree of abasement, and the relation it bears to that real dignity. Thus the complying with the same low place, or low act, may be an evidence of great humility in one, that evidences but little or no humility in another. But truly humble Christians have so mean an opinion of their own real dignity, that all their selfabasement, when considered with relation to that, and compared to that, appears very small to them. It does not seem to them to be any great humility, or any abasement to be made much of, for such poor, vile, abject creatures as they, to lie at the foot of God.

The degree of humility is to be judged of by the degree of abasement, and the degree of the cause for abasement: But he that is truly and eminently humble, never thinks his humility great, considering the cause. The cause why he should be abased appears so great, and the abasement of the

frame of his heart so greatly short of it, that he takes much more notice of his pride than his humility.

Every one that has been conversant with souls under convictions of sin, knows that those who are greatly convinced of sin, are not apt to think themselves greatly convinced. And the reason is this: Men judge of the degree of their own convictions of sin by two things jointly considered, viz. the degree of sense which they have of guilt and pollution, and the degree of cause they have for such a sense, in the degree of their real sinfulness. It is really no argument of any great conviction of sin, for some men to think themselves to be very sinful, beyond most others in the world; because they are so indeed, very plainly and notoriously. And therefore a far less conviction of sin may incline such an one to think so than another; he must be very blind indeed not to be sensible of it. But he that is truly under great convictions of sin, naturally thinks this to be his case. It appears to him, that the cause he has to be sensible of guilt and pollution, is greater than others have; and therefore he ascribes his sensibleness of this to the greatness of his sin, and not to the greatness of his sensibility. It is natural for one under great convictions, to think himself one of the greatest of sinners in reality, and also that it is so very plainly and evidently; for the greater his convictions are, the more plain and evident it seems to be to him. And therefore it necessarily seems to him so plain and so easy to him to see it, that it may be seen without much conviction. That man is under great convictions, whose conviction is great in proportion to his sin. But no man that is truly under great convictions, thinks his conviction great in proportion to his sin. For if he does, it is a certain sign that he inwardly thinks his sins small. And if that be the case, that is a certain evidence that his conviction is small. And this, by the way, is the main reason that persons, when under a work of humiliation, are not sensible of it in the time of it.

And as it is with conviction of sin, just so it is, by parity of reason, with respect to persons' conviction or sensibleness of their own meanness and vileness, their own blindness, their

own impotence, and all that low sense that a Christian has of himself, in the exercise of evangelical humiliation. So that in a high degree of this, the saints are never disposed to think their sensibleness of their own meanness, filthiness, impotence, &c. to be great; because it never appears great to them considering the cause.

An eminent saint is not apt to think himself eminent in any thing; all his graces and experiences are ready to appear to him to be comparatively small; but especially his humility. There is nothing that appertains to Christian experience, and true piety, that is so much out of his sight as his humility. He is a thousand times more quicksighted to discern his pride than his humility: That he easily discerns, and is apt to take much notice of, but hardly discerns his humility. On the contrary, the deluded hypocrite, that is under the power of spiritual pride, is so blind to nothing as his pride; and so quicksighted to nothing, as the shews of humility that are in him.

The humble Christian is more apt to find fault with his own pride than with other men's. He is apt to put the best construction on others words and behavior, and to think that none are so proud as himself. But the proud hypocrite is quick to discern the mote in his brother's eye, in this respect; while he sees nothing of the beam in his own. He is very often much in crying out of others' pride, finding fault with others' apparel, and way of living; and is affected ten times as much with his neighbor's ring or ribband, as with all the filthiness of his own heart.

From the disposition there is in hypocrites to think highly of their humility, it comes to pass that counterfeit humility is forward to put itself forth to view. Those that have it, are apt to be much in speaking of their humiliations, and to set them forth in high terms, and to make a great outward shew of humility, in affected looks, gestures, or manner of speech, or meanness of apparel, or some affected singularity. So it was of old with the false prophets, Zech. xiii. 4; so it was with the hypocritical Jews, Isa. lvii. 5, and so Christ tells us it was with the Pharisees, Matth. vi. 16. But it is contrari-

wise with true humility; they that have it, are not apt to display their eloquence in setting of it forth, or to speak of the degree of their abasement in strong terms.* It does not affect to shew itself in any singular outward meanness of apparel, or way of living; agreeable to what is implied in Matth. vi. 17. "But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face. Col. ii 23. Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship and humility, and neglecting of the body." Nor is true humility a noisy thing; it is not loud and boisterous. The scripture represents it as of a contrary nature. Ahab, when he had a visible humility, a resemblance of true humility, went softly, 1 Kings xxi. 27. A penitent, in the exercise of true humiliation, is represented as still and silent, Lam. iii. 28. "He sitteth alone and keepeth silence, because he hath borne it upon him." And silence is mentioned as what attends humility, Prov. xxx. 32. "If thou hast done foolishly in lifting up thyself, or if thou hast thought evil, lay thine hand upon thy mouth."

Thus I have particularly and largely shewn the nature of that true humility that attends holy affections, as it appears in its tendency to cause persons to think meanly of their attainments in religion, as compared with the attainments of others, and particularly of their attainments in humility: And have shewn the contrary tendency of spiritual pride, to dispose persons to think their attainments in these respects to be great. I have insisted the longer on this, because I look upon it as a matter of great importance, as it affords a certain distinction between true and counterfeit humility; and also as this disposition of hypocrites to look on themselves better than others, is what God has declared to be very hateful to

* It is an observation of Mr. Jones, in his excellent treatise of the canon of the New Testament, that the evangelist Mark, who was the companion of St. Peter, and is supposed to have written his gospel under the direction of that apostle, when he mentions Peter's repentance after his denying his Master, does not use such strong terms to set it forth as the other evangelists, he only uses these words, "When he thought thereon, he wept," Mark xiv. 72, whereas the other evangelists say thus, "he went out and wept bitterly," Matth. xxvi. 75. Luke xxii. 62.

him, "a smoke in his nose, and a fire that burneth all the day, Isa. lxv. 5." It is mentioned as an instance of the pride of the inhabitants of that holy city (as it was called) Jerusalem, that they esteemed themselves far better than the people of Sodom, and so looked upon them worthy to be overlooked and disregarded by them, Ezek. xvi. 56. "For thy sister Sodom was not mentioned by thy mouth in the day of thy pride."

Let not the reader lightly pass over these things in application to himself. If you once have taken it in, that it is a bad sign for a person to be apt to think himself a better saint than others, there will arise a blinding prejudice in your own favor; and there will probably be need of a great strictness of selfexamination, in order to determine whether it be so with you. If on the proposal of the question, you answer, "No, it seems to me, none are so bad as I," do not let the matter pass off so; but examine again, whether or no you do not think yourself better than others on this very account, because you imagine you think so meanly of yourself. Have not you an high opinion of this humility? And if you answer again, "No; I have not an high opinion of my humility; it seems to me I am as proud as the devil;" yet examine again, whether selfconceit do not rise up under this cover; whether on this very account, that you think yourself as proud as the devil, you do not think yourself to be very humble.

From this opposition that there is between the nature of a true, and of a counterfeit humility, as to the esteem that the subjects of them have of themselves, arises a manifold contrariety of temper and behavior.

A truly humble person, having such a mean opinion of his righteousness and holiness, is poor in spirit. For a person to be poor in spirit, is to be in his own sense and apprehension poor, as to what is in him, and to be of an answerable disposition. Therefore a truly humble person, especially one eminently humble, naturally behaves himself in many respects as a poor man. "The poor useth intreaties, but the rich answereth roughly." A poor man is not disposed to quick and high resentment when he is among the rich: He

is apt to yield to others, for he knows others are above him; he is not stiff and selfwilled; he is patient with hard fare; he expects no other than to be despised, and takes it patiently; he does not take it heinously that he is overlooked and but little regarded; he is prepared to be in a low place; he readily honors his superiors; he takes reproofs quietly; he readily honors others as above him; he easily yields to be taught, and does not claim much to his understanding and judgment; he is not over nice or humorsome, and has his spirit subdued to hard things; he is not assuming, nor apt to take much upon him, but it is natural for him to be subject to others. Thus it is with the humble Christian. Humility is (as the great Mastricht expresses it) a kind of holy pusillanimity.

A man that is very poor is a beggar; so is he that is poor in spirit. This is a great difference between those affections that are gracious, and those that are false: Under the former, the person continues still a poor beggar at God's gates, exceeding empty and needy; but the latter make men appear to themselves rich, and increased with goods, and not very necessitous; they have a great stock in their own imagination for their subsistence.*

* "This spirit ever keeps a man poor and vile in his own eyes, and empty.—When the man hath got some knowledge, and can discourse pretty well, and hath some taste of the heavenly gift, some sweet illapses of grace, and so his conscience is pretty well quieted: And if he hath got some answer to his prayers, and hath sweet affections, he grows full: And having ease to his conscience, casts off sense, and daily groaning under sin. And hence the spirit of prayer dies: He loses his esteem of God's ordinances, feels not such need of them; or gets no good, feels no life or power by them.—This is the woeful condition of some; but yet they know it not. But now he that is filled with the Spirit the Lord empties him; and the more, the longer he lives. So that though others think he needs not much grace, yet he accounts himself the poorest." *Shepard's Parable of the Ten Virgins*, Part II. p. 132.

"After all fillings, be ever empty, hungry, and feeling need, and praying for more." Ibid. p. 151.

"Truly, brethren when I see the curse of God upon many Christians, that are now grown full of their parts, gifts, peace, comforts, abilities, duties, I stand adoring the riches of the Lord's mercy, to a little handful of poor believers, not only in making them empty, but in keeping them so all their days." *Shepard's Sound Believer*, the late edition in Boston, p. 158, 159.

A poor man is modest in his speech and behavior; so, and much more, and more certainly and universally, is one that is poor in spirit; he is humble and modest in his behavior amongst men. It is in vain for any to pretend that they are humble, and as little children before God, when they are haughty, assuming, and impudent in their behavior amongst men. The apostle informs us, that the design of the gospel is to cut off all glorying, not only before God, but also before men, Rom. iv. 1, 2. Some pretend to great humiliation, that are very haughty, audacious, and assuming in their external appearance and behavior: But they ought to consider those scriptures, Psal. cxxxi. 1. "Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty; neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me. Prov. vi. 16, 17. "These six things doth the Lord hate; yea seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, &c."....Chap. xxi. 4. "An high look, and a proud heart are sin." Psal. xviii. 27. "Thou wilt bring down high looks." And Psal. ci. 5. "Him that hath an high look, and a proud heart, I will not suffer." 1 Cor. xiii. 4. "Charity vaunteth not itself, doth not behave itself unseemly." There is a certain amiable modesty and fear that belongs to a Christian behavior among men, arising from humility, that the scripture often speaks of, 1 Pet. iii. 15. "Be ready to give an answer to every man that asketh you.....with meekness and fear." Romans xiii. 7. "Fear to whom fear." 2 Cor. vii. 15. "Whilst he remembereth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling you received him." Eph. vi. 5. "Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling." 1 Pet. ii. 18. "Servants be subject to your masters with all fear." 1 Pet. iii. 2. "While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear." 1 Tim. ii. 9. "That women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety." In this respect a Christian is like a little child; a little child is modest before men, and his heart is apt to be possessed with fear and awe amongst them.

The same spirit will dispose a Christian to honor all men, 1 Pet. ii. 17. "Honor all men." A humble Christian is not only disposed to honor the saints in his behavior; but others also, in all those ways that do not imply a visible approbation of their sins. Thus Abraham, the great pattern of believers, honored the children of Heth, Gen. xxiii. 7. "Abraham stood up, and bowed himself to the people of the land." This was a remarkable instance of a humble behavior towards them that were out of Christ, and that Abraham knew to be accursed: And therefore would by no means suffer his servant to take a wife to his son, from among them; and Esau's wives, being of these children of Heth, were a grief of mind to Isaac and Rebekah. So Paul honored Festus, Acts xxvi. 25. "I am not mad, most noble Festus." Not only will Christian humility dispose persons to honor those wicked men that are out of the visible church, but also false brethren and persecutors. As Jacob, when he was in an excellent frame, having just been wrestling all night with God, and received the blessing, honored Esau, his false and persecuting brother. Gen. xxxiii. 3. "Jacob bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother Esau." So he called him lord; and commanded all his family to honor him in like manner.

Thus I have endeavored to describe the heart and behavior of one that is governed by a truly gracious humility, as exactly agreeable to the scriptures as I am able.

Now, it is out of such a heart as this, that all truly holy affections do flow. Christian affections are like Mary's precious ointment that she poured on Christ's head, that filled the whole house with a sweet odor. That was poured out of an alabaster box; so gracious affections flow out to Christ out of a pure heart. That was poured out of a broken box; until the box was broken, the ointment could not flow, nor diffuse its odor; so gracious affections flow out of a broken heart. Gracious affections are also like those of Mary Magdalene (Luke vii. at the latter end) who also pours precious ointment on Christ, out of an alabaster broken box, anointing therewith the feet of Jesus, when she had washed them with

her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head. All gracious affections, that are a sweet odor to Christ, and that fill the soul of a Christian with an heavenly sweetness and fragrancy, are broken hearted affections. A truly Christian love, either to God or men, is a humble broken hearted love. The desires of the saints, however earnest, are humble desires: Their hope is an humble hope; and their joy, even when it is unspeakable, and full of glory, is a humble broken hearted joy, and leaves the Christian more poor in spirit, and more like a little child, and more disposed to an universal lowliness of behavior.

VII. Another thing, wherein gracious affections are distinguished from others, is, that they are attended with a change of nature.

All gracious affections do arise from a spiritual understanding, in which the soul has the excellency and glory of divine things discovered to it, as was shewn before. But all spiritual discoveries are transforming; and not only make an alteration of the present exercise, sensation, and frame of the soul; but such power and efficacy have they, that they make an alteration in the very nature of the soul. 2 Cor. iii. 18. "But we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." Such power as this is properly divine power, and is peculiar to the Spirit of the Lord: Other power may make a great alteration in men's present frames and feelings: But it is the power of a Creator only that can change the nature, or give a new nature. And no discoveries or illuminations, but those that are divine and supernatural, will have this supernatural effect. But this effect all those discoveries have, that are truly divine. The soul is deeply affected by these discoveries, and so affected as to be transformed.

Thus it is with those affections that the soul is the subject of in its conversion. The scripture representations of conversion do strongly imply and signify a change of nature: Such as "being born again; becoming new creatures; rising

from the dead; being renewed in the spirit of the mind; dying to sin, and living to righteousness; putting off the old man, and putting on the new man; a being ingrafted into a new stock; a having a divine seed implanted in the heart; a being made partakers of the divine nature, &c.

Therefore if there be no great and remarkable abiding change in persons, that think they have experienced a work of conversion, vain are all their imaginations and pretences, however they have been affected.* Conversion is a great and universal change of the man, turning him from sin to God. A man may be restrained from sin, before he is converted; but when he is converted, he is not only restrained from sin, his very heart and nature is turned from it unto holiness: So that thenceforward he becomes a holy person, and an enemy to sin. If therefore, after a person's high affections, at his supposed first conversion, it comes to that in a little time, that there is no very sensible, or remarkable alteration in him, as to those bad qualities, and evil habits, which before were visible in him, and he is ordinarily under the prevalence of the same kind of dispositions that he used to be, and the same things seem to belong to his character; he appears as selfish, carnal, as stupid, and perverse, as unchristian and unsavory as ever; it is greater evidence against him, than the brightest story of experiences that ever was told, is for him. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision, nor uncircumcision, neither high profession, nor low profession, neither a fair story, nor a broken one, avails any thing; but a new creature.

If there be a very great alteration visible in a person for a while; if it be not abiding, but he afterwards returns, in a stated manner, to be much as he used to be; it appears to be no change of nature; for nature is an abiding thing. A swine that is of a filthy nature may be washed, but the swinish na-

* "I would not judge of the whole soul's coming to Christ, so much by sudden pangs as by inward bent. For the whole soul, in affectionate expressions and actions, may be carried to Christ; but being without this bent, and change of affections, is unsound." *Shepard's Parable*, Part I. p. 203.

ture remains; and a dove that is of a cleanly nature may be defiled, but its cleanly nature remains.†

Indeed allowances must be made for the natural temper; conversion does not entirely root out the natural temper; those sins which a man by his natural constitution was most inclined to before his conversion, he may be most apt to fall into still. But yet conversion will make a great alteration even with respect to these sins. Though grace, while imperfect, does not root out an evil natural temper, yet it is of great power and efficacy with respect to it, to correct it. The change that is wrought in conversion, is an universal change; grace changes a man with respect to whatever is sinful in him; the old man is put off, and the new man put on; he is sanctified throughout; and the man becomes a new creature, old things are passed away, and all things are become new; all sin is mortified, constitution sins, as well as others. If a man before his conversion, was by his natural constitution especially inclined to lasciviousness, or drunkenness, or maliciousness; converting grace will make a great alteration in him, with respect to these evil dispositions; so that however he may be still most in danger of these sins, yet they shall no longer have dominion over him; nor will they any more be properly his character. Yea, true repentance does in some respects, especially turn a man against his own iniquity, that wherein he has been most guilty, and has chiefly dishonored God. He that forsakes other sins, but saves his leading sin, the iniquity he is chiefly inclined to, is like Saul, when sent against God's enemies the Amalekites, with a strict charge to save none of them alive, but utterly to destroy them, small and great; who utterly destroyed inferior people, but saved the king, the chief of them all, alive.

† "It is with the soul, as with water; all the cold may be gone, but the native principle of cold remains still. You may remove the burning of lusts, not the blackness of nature. Where the power of sin lies, change of conscience from security to terror, change of life from profaneness to civility, and fashions of the world, to escape the pollutions thereof, change of lusts, may quench them for a time: But the nature is never changed in the best hypocrite that ever was. *Sheharu's Parable*, Part I. p. 194.

Some foolishly make it an argument in favor of their discoveries and affections, that when they are gone, they are left wholly without any life or sense, or any thing beyond what they had before. They think it an evidence that what they experienced was wholly of God, and not of themselves, because (say they) when God is departed, all is gone; they can see and feel nothing, and are no better than they used to be.

It is very true, that all grace and goodness in the hearts of the saints is entirely from God; and they are universally and immediately dependent on him for it. But yet these persons are mistaken, as to the manner of God's communicating himself and his holy Spirit, in imparting saving grace to the soul. He gives his Spirit to be united to the faculties of the soul, and to dwell there after the manner of a principle of nature; so that the soul, in being endued with grace, is endued with a new nature: But nature is an abiding thing. All the exercises of grace are entirely from Christ: But those exercises are not from Christ, as something that is alive, moves and stirs, something that is without life, and remains without life; but as having life communicated to it; so as, through Christ's power, to have inherent in itself a vital nature. In the soul where Christ savingly is, there he lives. He does not only live without it, so as violently to actuate it, but he lives in it, so that that also is alive. Grace in the soul is as much from Christ, as the light in a glass, held out in the sunbeams, is from the sun. But this represents the manner of the communication of grace to the soul, but in part; because the glass remains as it was, the nature of it not being at all changed, it is as much without any lightsomeness in its nature as ever. But the soul of a saint receives light from the Sun of righteousness, in such a manner, that its nature is changed, and it becomes properly a luminous thing; not only does the sun shine in the saints, but they also become little suns, partaking of the nature of the fountain of their light. In this respect, the manner of their derivation of light, is like that of the lamps in the tabernacle, rather than that of a reflecting glass; which, though they were lit up by fire from heaven,

yet thereby became themselves burning shining things. The saints do not only drink of the water of life, that flows from the original fountain; but this water becomes a fountain of water in them, springing up there, and flowing out of them, John iv. 14, and chap. vii. 38, 39. Grace is compared to a seed implanted, that not only is in the ground, but has hold of it, has root there, and grows there, and is an abiding principle of life and nature there.

As it is with spiritual discoveries and affections given at first conversion, so it is in all illuminations and affections of that kind, that persons are the subjects of afterwards; they are all transforming. There is a like divine power and energy in them, as in the first discoveries; and they still reach the bottom of the heart, and affect and alter the very nature of the soul, in proportion to the degree in which they are given. And a transformation of nature is continued and carried on by them, to the end of life, until it is brought to perfection in glory. Hence the progress of the work of grace in the hearts of the saints, is represented in scripture, as a continued conversion and renovation of nature. So the apostle exhorts those that were at Rome, "beloved of God, called to be saints," and that were subjects of God's redeeming mercies, "to be transformed by the renewing of their mind, Rom. xii. 1, 2. I beseech you therefore, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice; and be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." Compared with chap. i. 7. So the apostle, writing to the "saints and faithful in Christ Jesus, that were at Ephesus (Eph. i. 1.) and those who were once dead in trespasses and sins, but were now quickened and raised up, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ, and created in Christ Jesus unto good works, that were once far off, but were now made nigh by the blood of Christ, and that were no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, and that were built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit; I say, the apostle writing to these, tells them, "that he ceased not to pray for them, that God would give them

the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of Christ; the eyes of their understanding being enlightened, that they might know, or experience, what was the exceeding greatness of God's power towards them that believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places," Eph. i. 16, to the end. In this the apostle has respect to the glorious power and work of God in converting and renewing the soul; as is most plain by the sequel. So the apostle exhorts the same persons "to put off the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of their minds; and to put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness," Eph. iv. 22, 23, 24."

There is a sort of high affections that some have from time to time, that leave them without any manner of appearance of an abiding effect. They go off suddenly; so that from the very height of their emotion, and seeming rapture, they pass at once to be quite dead, and void of all sense and activity. It surely is not wont to be thus with high gracious affections;* they leave a sweet savor and relish of divine things on the heart, and a stronger bent of soul towards God and holiness. As Moses' face not only shone while he was in the mount, extraordinarily conversing with God, but it continued to shine after he came down from the mount.... When men have been conversing with Christ in an extraordinary manner, there is a sensible effect of it remaining upon them; there is something remarkable in their disposition and frame, which if we take knowledge of, and trace to its cause, we shall find it is because they have been with Jesus, Acts iv. 13.

VIII. Truly gracious affections differ from those affections that are false and delusive in that they tend to, and are

* "Do you think the Holy Ghost comes on a man as on Balaam, by immediate acting, and then leaves him, and then he has nothing?" *Shepard's Parable*, Part I. p. 126.

attended with the lamb like, dove like spirit and temper of Jesus Christ; or in other words, they naturally beget and promote such a spirit of love, meekness, quietness, forgiveness and mercy, as appeared in Christ.

The evidence of this in the scripture is very abundant. If we judge of the nature of Christianity, and the proper spirit of the gospel, by the word of God, this spirit is what may, by way of eminency, be called the Christian spirit; and may be looked upon as the true, and distinguishing disposition of the hearts of Christians, as Christians. When some of the disciples of Christ said something, through inconsideration and infirmity, that was not agreeable to such a spirit, Christ told them, that they knew not what manner of spirit they were of; Luke ix. 55, implying that this spirit that I am speaking of, is the proper spirit of his religion and kingdom. All that are truly godly, and real disciples of Christ, have this spirit in them; and not only so, but they are of this spirit; it is the spirit by which they are so possessed and governed, that it is their true and proper character. This is evident by what the wise man says, Prov. xvii. 27, (having respect plainly to such a spirit as this.) "A man of understanding is of an excellent spirit:" And by the particular description Christ gives of the qualities and temper of such as are truly blessed, that shall obtain mercy, and are God's children and heirs, Mat. v. "Blessed are the meek: For they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are the merciful: For they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the peacemakers: For they shall be called the children of God." And that this spirit is the special character of the elect of God, is manifested by Col. iii. 12, 13. "Put on therefore as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another." And the apostle, speaking of that temper and disposition, which he speaks of as the most excellent and essential thing in Christianity, and that without which none are true Christians, and the most glorious profession and gifts are nothing (calling this spirit by the name of charity, he describes it thus) 1 Cor. xiii.

4, 5. "Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil." And the same apostle, Gal. v. designedly declaring the distinguishing marks and fruits of true Christian grace, chiefly insists on the things that appertain to such a temper and spirit as I am speaking of, ver. 22, 23. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." And so does the Apostle James, in describing true grace, or that wisdom that is from above, with that declared design, that others who are of a contrary spirit may not deceive themselves, and lie against the truth, in professing to be Christians, when they are not, James iii. 14.....17. "If ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not; and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion, and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits."

Every thing that appertains to holiness of heart, does indeed belong to the nature of true Christianity, and the character of Christians; but a spirit of holiness as appearing in some particular graces, may more especially be called the Christian spirit or temper. There are some amiable qualities and virtues, that do more especially agree with the nature of the gospel constitution, and Christian profession; because there is a special agreeableness in them, with those divine attributes which God has more remarkably manifested and glorified in the work of redemption by Jesus Christ, that is the grand subject of the Christian revelation; and also a special agreeableness with those virtues that were so wonderfully exercised by Jesus Christ towards us in that affair, and the blessed example he hath therein set us; and likewise because they are peculiarly agreeable to the special drift and design of the work of redemption, and the benefits we thereby receive, and the relation that it brings us into, to God and one another. And these virtues are such as humility, meekness,

love, forgiveness, and mercy. These things therefore especially belong to the character of Christians, as such.

These things are spoken of as what are especially the character of Jesus Christ himself, the great head of the Christian church. They are so spoken of in the prophecies of the Old Testament; as in that cited, Matth. xxi. 5. "Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass." So Christ himself speaks of them, Matth, xi. 29. "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart." The same appears by the name by which Christ is so often called in scripture, viz. the Lamb. And as these things are especially the character of Christ, so they are also especially the character of Christians. Christians are Christlike; none deserve the name of Christians, that are not so in their prevailing character. "The new man is renewed, after the image of him that creates him, Col. iii. 10. All true Christians behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord, and are changed into the same image, by his Spirit, 2 Cor. iii. 18. The elect are all predestinated to be conformed to the image of the Son of God, that he might be the first born among many brethren, Rom. viii. 29. As we have borne the image of the first man, that is earthly, so we must also bear the image of the heavenly; for as is the earthly, such are they also that are earthly; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly, 1 Cor. xv. 47, 48, 49."....Christ is full of grace; and Christians all receive of his fulness, and grace for grace; i. e. there is grace in Christians answering to grace in Christ, such an answerableness as there is between the wax and the seal; there is character for character: Such kind of graces, such a spirit and temper, the same things that belong to Christ's character, belong to theirs. That disposition, wherein Christ's character does in a special manner consist, therein does his image in a special manner consist. Christians that shine by reflecting the light of the Sun of righteousness, do shine with the same sort of brightness, the same mild, sweet, and pleasant beams. These lamps of the spiritual temple, that are enkindled by fire from heaven, burn with the

same sort of flame. The branch is of the same nature with the stock and root, has the same sap, and bears the same sort of fruit. The members have the same kind of life with the head. It would be strange if Christians should not be of the same temper and spirit that Christ is of; when they are his flesh and his bone, yea, are one spirit, 1 Cor. vi. 17; and live so, that it is not they that live, but Christ that lives in them. A Christian spirit is Christ's mark that he sets upon the souls of his people; his seal in their foreheads, bearing his image and superscription.....Christians are the followers of Christ; and they are so, as they are obedient to that call of Christ, Matth. xi. 28, 29. "Come to me and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart." They follow him as the Lamb, Rev. xiv. 4....." These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth." True Christians are as it were clothed with the meek, quiet, and loving temper of Christ; for as many as are in Christ, have put on Christ. And in this respect the church is clothed with the sun, not only by being clothed with his imputed righteousness, but also by being adorned with his graces, Rom. xiii. 14. Christ the great Shepherd, is himself a Lamb, and believers are also lambs; all the flock are lambs, John xxi. 15. "Feed my lambs." Luke x. 3. "I send you forth as lambs in the midst of wolves." The redemption of the church by Christ from the power of the devil, was typified of old, by David's delivering the lamb out of the mouth of the lion and the bear.

That such manner of virtue as has been spoken of, is the very nature of the Christian spirit, or the spirit that worketh in Christ, and in his members, and in the distinguishing nature of it, is evident by this, that the dove is the very symbol or emblem, chosen of God, to represent it. Those things are fittest emblems of other things, which do best represent that which is most distinguishing in their nature. The Spirit that descended on Christ, when he was anointed of the Father, descended on him like a dove. The dove is a noted emblem of meekness, harmlessness, peace and love. But the same Spirit that descended on the head of the church, descends to the members. "God hath sent forth the Spirit of

his Son into their hearts," Gal. iv. 6. And "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. Rom. viii. 9. There is but one Spirit to the whole mystical body, head and members, 1 Cor. vi. 17. Eph. iv. 4. Christ breathes his own Spirit on his disciples, John xx. 22. As Christ was anointed with the Holy Ghost, descending on him like a dove, so Christians also "have an anointing from the Holy One," 1 John ii. 20, 27. And they are anointed with the same oil; it is the same "precious ointment on the head, that goes down to the skirts of the garments." And on both, it is a spirit of peace and love. Psalm cxxxiii. 1, 2. "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is, for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garments." The oil on Aaron's garments had the same sweet and inimitable odor with that on his head; the smell of the same sweet spices, Christian affections, and a Christian behavior, is but the flowing out of the savor of Christ's sweet ointments. Because the church has a dovelike temper and disposition, therefore it is said of her that she has doves' eyes, Cant. i. 15. "Behold, thou art fair, my love, behold thou art fair, thou hast doves' eyes." And Chap. iv. 1. "Behold, thou art fair, my love, behold, thou art fair, thou hast doves' eyes within thy locks." The same that is said of Christ, Chap. vi. 12. "His eyes are as the eyes of doves." And the church is frequently compared to a dove in scripture, Cant. ii. 14. "O, my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock."....Chap. v. 2. "Open to me, my love, my dove." And Chap. vi. 9. "My dove, my undefiled is but one." Psal. lxviii. 13. "Ye shall be as the wings of a dove, covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold." And lxxiv. 19. "O deliver not the soul of thy turtle dove unto the multitude of the wicked." The dove that Noah sent out of the ark, that could find no rest for the sole of her foot, until she returned, was a type of a true saint.

Meekness is so much the character of the saints, that the meek and the godly, are used as synonimous terms in scripture: So Psalm xxxvii. 10, 11; the wicked and the meek

are set in opposition one to another, as wicked and godly, "Yet a little while and the wicked shall not be: But the meek shall inherit the earth." So Psal. cxlvii. 6. "The Lord lifteth up the meek: He casteth the wicked down to the ground."

It is doubtless very much on this account, that Christ represents all his disciples, all the heirs of heaven, as little children, Matth. xix. 14. "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Matth. x. 42. "Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones, a cup of cold water, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward." Matth. xviii. 6. "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones, &c." ver. 10. "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones," ver. 14. "It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish." John xiii. 33. "Little children, yet a little while I am with you." Little children are innocent and harmless; they do not do a great deal of mischief in the world; men need not be afraid of them; they are no dangerous sort of persons; their anger does not last long, they do not lay up injuries in high resentment, entertaining deep and rooted malice. So Christians, in malice, are children, 1 Cor. xiv. 20. Little children are not guileful and deceitful, but plain and simple; they are not versed in the arts of fiction and deceit; and are strangers to artful disguises. They are yieldable and flexible, and not wilful and obstinate; do not trust to their own understanding, but rely on the instructions of parents, and others of superior understanding. Here is therefore a fit and lively emblem of the followers of the Lamb. Persons being thus like little children, is not only a thing highly commendable, and what Christians approve and aim at, and which some of extraordinary proficiency do attain to; but it is their universal character, and absolutely necessary in order to entering into the kingdom of heaven; Matth. xviii. 3. "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Mark x. 15. Verily I say unto you, Who-

soever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein."

But here some may be ready to say, is there no such thing as Christian fortitude, and boldness for Christ, being good soldiers in the Christian warfare, and coming out boldly against the enemies of Christ and his people ?

To which I answer, There doubtless is such a thing. The whole Christian life is compared to a warfare, and fitly so. And the most eminent Christians are the best soldiers, endued with the greatest degrees of Christian fortitude. And it is the duty of God's people to be stedfast and vigorous in their opposition to the designs and ways of such as are endeavoring to overthrow the kingdom of Christ, and the interest of religion. But yet many persons seem to be quite mistaken concerning the nature of Christian fortitude. It is an exceeding diverse thing from a brutal fierceness, or the boldness of the beasts of prey. True Christian fortitude consists in strength of mind, through grace, exerted in two things; in ruling and suppressing the evil and unruly passions and affections of the mind ; and in steadfastly and freely exerting, and following good affections and dispositions, without being hindered by sinful fear, or the opposition of enemies. But the passions that are restrained and kept under, in the exercise of this Christian strength and fortitude, are those very passions that are vigorously and violently exerted in a false boldness for Christ. And those affections that are vigorously exerted in true fortitude, are those Christian, holy affections, that are directly contrary to them. Though Christian fortitude appears, in withstanding and counteracting the enemies that are without us ; yet it much more appears, in resisting and suppressing the enemies that are within us ; because they are our worst and strongest enemies, and have greatest advantage against us. The strength of the good soldier of Jesus Christ appears in nothing more, than in stedfastly maintaining the holy calm, meekness, sweetness, and benevolence of his mind, amidst all the storms, injuries, strange behavior, and surprising acts and events of this evil and unreasonable world. The scripture seems to intimate that true

fortitude consists chiefly in this, Prov. xvi. 32. "He that is slow to anger, is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city."

The directest and surest way in the world, to make a right judgment what a holy fortitude is, in fighting with God's enemies, is to look to the Captain of all God's hosts, and our greater leader and example, and see wherein his fortitude and valour appeared, in his chief conflict, and in the time of the greatest battle that ever was, or ever will be fought with these enemies, when he fought with them alone, and of the people there was none with him, and exercised his fortitude in the highest degree that ever he did, and got that glorious victory that will be celebrated in the praises and triumphs of all the hosts of heaven, throughout all eternity; even to Jesus Christ in the time of his last sufferings, when his enemies in earth and hell made their most violent attack upon him, compassing him round on every side, like renting and roaring lions. Doubtless here we shall see the fortitude of a holy warrior and champion in the cause of God, in its highest perfection and greatest lustre, and an example fit for the soldiers to follow that fight under this Captain. But how did he show his holy boldness and valour at that time? Not in the exercise of any fiery passions; not in fierce and violent speeches, and vehemently declaiming against and crying out of the intolerable wickedness of opposers, giving them their own in plain terms: But in not opening his mouth when afflicted and oppressed, in going as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before his shearers is dumb, not opening his mouth; praying that the Father would forgive his cruel enemies because they knew not what they did; not shedding others' blood, but with all conquering patience and love, shedding his own. Indeed one of his disciples, that made a forward pretence to boldness for Christ, and confidently declared he would sooner die with Christ than deny him, began to lay about him with a sword: But Christ meekly rebukes him, and heals the wound he gives. And never was the patience, meekness, love, and forgiveness of Christ in so glorious a manifestation, as at that time. Never did he

appear so much a lamb, and never did he shew so much of the dovelike spirit, as at that time. If therefore we see any of the followers of Christ, in the midst of the most violent, unreasonable, and wicked opposition of God's and his own enemies, maintaining under all this temptation, the humility, quietness, and gentleness of a lamb, and the harmlessness, and love, and sweetness of a dove, we may well judge that here is a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

When persons are fierce and violent, and exert their sharp and bitter passions, it shows weakness, instead of strength and fortitude. 1 Cor. iii. at the beginning, "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. For ye are yet carnal: For whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?"

There is a pretended boldness for Christ that arises from no better principle than pride. A man may be forward to expose himself to the dislike of the world, and even to provoke their displeasure out of pride. For it is the nature of spiritual pride to cause men to seek distinction and singularity; and so oftentimes to set themselves at war with those that they call carnal, that they may be more highly exalted among their party. True boldness for Christ is universal, and overcomes all, and carries men above the displeasure of friends and foes; so that they will forsake all rather than Christ; and will rather offend all parties, and be thought meanly of by all, than offend Christ. And that duty which tries whether a man is willing to be despised by them that are of his own party, and thought the least worthy to be regarded by them, is a much more proper trial of his boldness for Christ, than his being forward to expose himself to the reproach of opposers. The apostle sought not glory, not only of Heathens and Jews, but of Christians; as he declares, 1 Thess. ii. 26. * He is bold for Christ, that has Christian fortitude enough, to confess his fault open-

* Mr. Shepard, speaking of hypocrites affecting applause, says, "Hence men forsake their friends, and trample under foot the scorns of the world: They have credit elsewhere. To maintain their interest in the love of godly men, they will suffer much." Parable of the Ten Virgins, Part I. p. 180.

ly, when he has committed one that requires it, and as it were to come down upon his knees before opposers. Such things as these are of vastly greater evidence of holy boldness, than resolutely and fiercely confronting opposers.

As some are much mistaken concerning the nature of true boldness for Christ, so they are concerning Christian zeal. It is indeed a flame, but a sweet one; or rather it is the heat and fervor of a sweet flame. For the flame of which it is the heat, is no other than that of divine love, or Christian charity; which is the sweetest and most benevolent thing that is, or can be, in the heart of man or angel. Zeal is the fervor of this flame, as it ardently and vigorously goes out towards the good that is its object, in desires of it, and pursuit after it; and so consequentially, in opposition to the evil that is contrary to it, and impedes it. There is indeed opposition, and vigorous opposition, that is a part of it, or rather is an attendant of it; but it is against things, and not persons. Bitterness against the persons of men is no part of it, but is very contrary to it; insomuch that so much the warmer true zeal is, and the higher it is raised, so much the farther are persons from such bitterness, and so much fuller of love, both to the evil and to the good. As appears from what has been just now observed, that it is no other, in its very nature and essence, than the fervor of a spirit of Christian love. And as to what opposition there is in it to things, it is firstly and chiefly against the evil things in the person himself, who has this zeal; against the enemies of God and holiness, that are in his own heart; (as these are most in his view, and what he has most to do with) and but secondarily against the sins of others. And therefore there is nothing in a true Christian zeal, that is contrary to that spirit of meekness, gentleness, and love, that spirit of a little child, a lamb and dove, that has been spoken of; but it is entirely agreeable to it, and tends to promote it.

But to say something particularly concerning this Christian spirit I have been speaking of, as exercised in these three things, forgiveness, love, and mercy; I would observe that the scripture is very clear and express concerning the abso-

lute necessity of each of these, as belonging to the temper and character of every Christian.

It is so as to a forgiving spirit, or a disposition to overlook and forgive injuries. Christ gives it to us both as a negative and positive evidence; and is express in teaching us, that if we are of such a spirit, it is a sign that we are in a state of forgiveness and favor ourselves: And that if we are not of such a spirit, we are not forgiven of God; and seems to take special care that we should take good notice of it, and always bear it on our minds, Matth. vi. 12, 14, 15. "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your father forgive your trespasses." Christ expresses the same again at another time, Mark xi. 25, 26, and again in Matth. xviii. 22, to the end, in the parable of the servant that owed his lord ten thousand talents, that would not forgive his fellow servant an hundred pence; and therefore was delivered to the tormentors. In the application of the parable Christ says, ver. 35. "So likewise shall my heavenly father do, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

And that all true saints are of a loving, benevolent, and beneficent temper, the scripture is very plain and abundant. Without it the apostle tells us, though we should speak with the tongues of men and angels, we are as a sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal; And that though we have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, yet without this spirit we are nothing. And there is no one virtue or disposition of the mind, that is so often, and so expressly insisted on, in the marks that are laid down in the New Testament, whereby to know true Christians. It is often given as a sign that is peculiarly distinguishing, by which all may know Christ's disciples, and by which they may know themselves; and is often laid down, both as a negative and positive evidence. Christ calls the law of love, by way of eminency, his commandment, John xiii. 34. "A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." And chap. xv. 12. "This

is my commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you." And ver. 17. "These things I command you, that ye love one another." And says, chap. xiii. 35. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." And chap. xiv. 21, (still with a special reference to this which he calls his commandment) "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." The beloved disciple who had so much of this sweet temper himself, abundantly insists on it, in his epistles. There is none of the apostles so much in laying down express signs of grace, for professors to try themselves by, as he; and in his signs, he insists scarcely on any thing else, but a spirit of Christian love, and an agreeable practice, 1 John ii. 9, 10. "He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. Chap. iii. 14. We know that we are passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren: He that loveth not his brother abideth in death, ver. 18, 19. My little children, let us not love in word and in tongue, but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him, ver. 23, 24. This is his commandment, that we should love one another. And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him; and hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the spirit which he hath given us. Chap. iv. 7, 8. Beloved, let us love one another: For love is of God; and every one that loveth, is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God: For God is love, ver 12, 13. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, because he hath given us of his Spirit, ver. 16. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him, ver. 20. If a man say I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: For he that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?"

And the scripture is as plain as it is possible it should be, that none are true saints, but those whose true character it is,

that they are of a disposition to pity and relieve their fellow creatures, that are poor, indigent, and afflicted, Psal. xxxvii. 21. "The righteous sheweth mercy, and giveth, ver. 26, He is ever merciful, and lendeth, Psal. cxii. 5. A good man sheweth favor, and lendeth, ver. 9. He hath dispersed abroad, and given to the poor, Prov. xiv. 31. He that honoreth God, hath mercy on the poor, Prov. xxi. 26. The righteous giveth, and spareth not, Jer. xxii. 16. He judgest the cause of the poor and needy, then it was well with him: Was not this to know me? Saith the Lord, Jam. i. 27. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father, is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, &c. Hos. vi. 6. For I have desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God, more than burnt offerings, Mat. v. 7. Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy. 2 Cor. viii. 8. I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love. Jam. ii. 13....16. For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy. What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food; and one of you say unto them, depart in peace, be you warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body, what doth it profit? 1 John iii. 17. Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" Christ in that description he gives us of the day of judgment, Mat. xxv. (which is the most particular that we have in all the Bible) represents that judgment will be passed at that day, according as men have been found to have been of a merciful spirit and practice, or otherwise. Christ's design in giving such a description of the process of that day, is plainly to possess all his followers with that apprehension, that unless this was their spirit and practice, there was no hope of their being accepted and owned by him at that day. Therefore this is an apprehension that we ought to be possessed with. We find in scripture, that a righteous man, and a merciful man are

synonymous expressions, Isa. lvii. 1. "The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart; and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come."

Thus we see how full, clear, and abundant, the evidence from scripture is, that those who are truly gracious, are under the government of that lamblike, dovelike Spirit of Jesus Christ, and that this is essentially and eminently the nature of the saving grace of the gospel, and the proper spirit of true Christianity. We may therefore undoubtedly determine, that all truly Christian affections are attended with such a spirit, and that this is the natural tendency of the fear and hope, the sorrow and the joy, the confidence and the zeal of true Christians.

None will understand me, that true Christians have no remains of a contrary spirit, and can never, in any instances, be guilty of a behavior disagreeable to such a spirit. But this I affirm, and shall affirm, until I deny the Bible to be any thing worth, that every thing in Christians that belongs to true Christianity, is of this tendency, and works this way; and that there is no true Christian upon earth, but is so under the prevailing power of such a spirit, that he is properly denominated from it, and it is truly and justly his character: And that therefore ministers, and others, have no warrant from Christ to encourage persons that are of a contrary character and behavior, to think they are converted, because they tell a fair story of illuminations and discoveries. In so doing, they would set up their own wisdom against Christ's, and judge without, and against that rule by which Christ has declared all men should know his disciples. Some persons place religion so much in certain transient illuminations and impressions (especially if they are in such a particular method and order) and so little in the spirit and temper persons are of, that they greatly deform religion, and form notions of Christianity quite different from what it is, as delineated in the scriptures. The scripture knows of no such true Christians, as are of a sordid, selfish, cross and contentious spirit. Nothing can be invented that is a greater absurdity, than a morose, hard,

close, high spirited, spiteful, true Christian. We must learn the way of bringing men to rules, and not rules to men, and so strain and stretch the rules of God's word, to take in ourselves, and some of our neighbors, until we make them wholly of none effect.

It is true, that allowances must be made for men's natural temper, with regard to these things, as well as others; but not such allowances, as to allow men, that once were wolves and serpents, to be now converted, without any remarkable change in the spirit of their mind. The change made by true conversion is wont to be most remarkable and sensible, with respect to that which before was the wickedness the person was most notoriously guilty of. Grace has as great a tendency to restrain and mortify such sins, as are contrary to the spirit that has been spoken of, as it is to mortify drunkenness or lasciviousness. Yea, the scripture represents the change wrought by gospel grace, as especially appearing in an alteration of the former sort, Isa. xi. 6....9. "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid: And the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed, their young ones shall lie down together: And the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." And to the same purpose is Isa. lxv. 25. Accordingly we find, that in the primitive times of the Christian church, converts were remarkably changed in this respect: Tit. iii. 3, &c. "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared; he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost. And Col. iii. 7, 8. "In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. But now you also put

off all these: Anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communications out of your mouth."

IX. Gracious affections soften the heart, and are attended and followed with a Christian tenderness of spirit.

False affections, however persons may seem to be melted by them while they are new, yet have a tendency in the end to harden the heart. A disposition to some kind of passions may be established; such as imply selfseeking, selfexaltation, and opposition to others. But false affections, with the delusion that attends them, finally tend to stupify the mind, and shut it up against those affections wherein tenderness of heart consists: And the effect of them at last is, that persons in the settled frame of their minds, become less affected with their present and past sins, and less conscientious with respect to future sins, less moved with the warnings and cautions of God's word, or God's chastisements in his providence, more careless of the frame of their hearts, and the manner and tendency of their behavior, less quicksighted to discern what is sinful, less afraid of the appearance of evil, than they were while they were under legal awakenings and fears of hell. Now they have been the subjects of such and such impressions and affections, and have a high opinion of themselves, and look on their state to be safe; they can be much more easy than before, in living in the neglect of duties that are troublesome and inconvenient; and are much more slow and partial in complying with difficult commands; are in no measure so alarmed at the appearance of their own defects and transgressions; are emboldened to favor themselves more, with respect to the labor, and painful care and exactness in their walk, and more easily yield to temptations, and the solicitations of their lusts; and have far less care of their behavior, when they come into the holy presence of God, in the time of public or private worship. Formerly it may be, under legal convictions, they took much pains in religion, and denied themselves in many things: But now they think themselves out of danger of hell, they very much put off the burden of the cross, and save themselves the trouble of difficult duties, and allow

themselves more in the enjoyment of their ease and their lusts.

Such persons as these, instead of embracing Christ as their Saviour from sin, trust in him as the saviour of their sins; instead of flying to him as their refuge from their spiritual enemies, they make use of him as the defence of their spiritual enemies, from God, and to strengthen them against him. They make Christ the minister of sin, and great officer and vicegerent of the devil, to strengthen his interest, and make him above all things in the world strong against Jehovah; so that they may sin against him with good courage, and without any fear, being effectually secured from restraints, by his most solemn warnings and most awful threatenings. They trust in Christ to preserve to them the quiet enjoyment of their sins, and to be their shield to defend them from God's displeasure; while they come close to him, even to his bosom, the place of his children, to fight against him, with their mortal weapons, hid under their skirts.* However, some of these, at the same time, make a great profession of love to God, and assurance of his favor, and great joy in tasting the sweetness of his love.

After this manner they trusted in Christ, that the Apostle Jude speaks of, who crept in among the saints unknown; but were really ungodly men, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, Jude 4. These are they that trust in their being righteous; and because God has promised that the righteous shall surely live, or certainly be saved, are therefore emboldened to commit iniquity, whom God threatens in Ezek. xxxiii. 13. "When I shall say to the righteous, that he shall surely live; if he trust to his own righteousness, and commit

* "These are hypocrites that believe, but fail in regard of the use of the gospel, and of the Lord Jesus. And these we read of, Jude 3, viz. of some men that did turn grace into wantonness. For therein appears the exceeding evil of a man's heart, that not only the law, but also the glorious gospel of the Lord Jesus, works in him all manner of unrighteousness. And it is too common for men at the first work of conversion, Oh then to cry for grace and Christ, and afterwards grow licentious, live and lie in the breach of the law, and take their warrant for their course from the gospel!" *Shepard's Parable*, Part I. p. 126.

iniquity; all his righteousness shall not be remembered, but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it."

Gracious affections are of a quite contrary tendency; they turn a heart of stone more and more into a heart of flesh. An holy love and hope are principles that are vastly more efficacious upon the heart, to make it tender, and to fill it with a dread of sin, or whatever might displease and offend God, and to engage it to watchfulness, and care, and strictness, than a slavish fear of hell. Gracious affections, as was observed before, flow out of a contrite heart, or (as the word signifies) a bruised heart, bruised and broken with godly sorrow; which makes the heart tender, as bruised flesh is tender, and easily hurt. Godly sorrow has much greater influence to make the heart tender, than mere legal sorrow from selfish principles.

The tenderness of the heart of a true Christian, is elegantly signified by our Saviour, in his comparing such a one to a little child. The flesh of a little child is very tender; so is the heart of one that is new born. This is represented in what we are told of Naaman's cure of his leprosy, by his washing in Jordan; which was undoubtedly a type of the renewing of the soul, by washing in the laver of regeneration. We are told, 2 Kings v. 14, "that he went down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God; and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child." Not only is the flesh of a little child tender, but his mind is tender. A little child has his heart easily moved, wrought upon and bowed: So is a Christian in spiritual things. A little child is apt to be affected with sympathy, to weep with them that weep, and cannot well bear to see others in distress: So it is with a Christian, John xi. 35. Rom. xii. 15. 1 Cor. xii. 26. A little child is easily won by kindness: So is a Christian. A little child is easily affected with grief at temporal evils, and has his heart melted, and falls a weeping: Thus tender is the heart of a Christian, with regard to the evil of sin. A little child is easily affrighted at the appearance of outward evils, or any thing that threatens its hurt: So is a Christian apt to be alarmed at the appear-

ance of moral evil, and any thing that threatens the hurt of the soul. A little child, when it meets enemies, or fierce beasts, is not apt to trust its own strength, but flies to its parents for refuge: So a saint is not selfconfident in engaging spiritual enemies, but flies to Christ. A little child is apt to be suspicious of evil in places of danger, afraid in the dark, afraid when left alone, or far from home: So is a saint apt to be sensible of his spiritual dangers, jealous of himself, full of fear when he cannot see his way plain before him, afraid to be left alone, and to be at a distance from God, Prov. xxviii. 14. "Happy is the man that feareth alway: But he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief." A little child is apt to be afraid of superiors, and to dread their anger, and tremble at their frowns and threatenings: So is a true saint with respect to God, Psal. cxix. 120. "My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments, Isa. lxvi. 2. To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and trembleth at my word, ver. 5. Hear ye the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his word. Ezra ix. 4. Then were assembled unto me every one that trembled at the words of the God of Israel. Chap. x. 3. According to the counsel of my Lord, and of those that tremble at the commandment of our God." A little child approaches superiors with awe: So do the saints approach God with holy awe and reverence, Job xiii. 2. "Shall not his excellency make you afraid? And his dread fall upon you?" Holy fear is so much the nature of true godliness, that it is called in scripture by no other name more frequently, than the fear of God.

Hence gracious affections do not tend to make men bold, forward, noisy, and boisterous; but rather to speak trembling, Hos. xiii. 1. "When Ephraim spake, trembling, he exalted himself in Israel; but when he offended in Baal, he died;" and to clothe with a kind of holy fear in all their behavior towards God and man; agreeably to Psal. ii. 11. 1 Pet. iii. 15. 2 Cor. vii. 15. Eph. vi. 5. 1 Pet. iii. 2. Rom. xi. 20.

But here some may object and say, is there no such thing as a holy boldness in prayer, and the duties of divine worship? I answer, there is doubtless such a thing; and it is chiefly to

be found in eminent saints, persons of great degrees of faith and love. But this holy boldness is not in the least opposite to reverence; though it be to disunion and servility. It abolishes or lessens that disposition which arises from moral distance or alienation; and also distance of relation, as that of a slave; but not at all, that which becomes the natural distance, whereby we are infinitely inferior. No boldness in poor sinful worms of the dust, that have a right sight of God and themselves, will prompt them to approach to God with less fear and reverence, than spotless and glorious angels in heaven, who cover their faces before his throne, Isa. vi. at the beginning. Rebecca (who in her marriage with Isaac, in almost all its circumstances, was manifestly a great type of the church, the spouse of Christ) when she meets Isaac, lights off from her camel, and takes a vail and covers herself; although she was brought to him as his bride, to be with him in the nearest relation, and most intimate union, that mankind are ever united one to another in * Elijah, that great prophet, who had so much holy familiarity with God, at a time of special nearness to God, even when he conversed with him in the mount, wrapped his face in his mantle. Which was not because he was terrified with any servile fear, by the terrible wind, and earthquake, and fire; but after these were all over, and God spake to him as a friend, in a still small voice, 1 Kings xix. 12, 13. "And after the fire, a still small voice; and it was so, when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle." And Moses, with whom God spake face to face, as a man speaks with his friend, and was distinguished from all the prophets, in the familiarity with God that he was admitted to; at a time when he was brought nearest of all, when God shewed him his glory in that same mount where he afterwards spake to Elijah, "He made haste, and bowed his head towards the earth, and worshipped," Exod. xxxiv. 8. There is in some persons a most unsuitable and unsufferable boldness, in their addresses to the great

* Dr. Ames, in his Cases of Conscience, Book III. chap. iv. speaks of an holy modesty in the worship of God, as one sign of true humility.

Jehovah, in an affectation of an holy boldness, and ostentation of eminent nearness and familiarity; the very thoughts of which would make them shrink into nothing, with horror and confusion, if they saw the distance that is between God and them. They are like the Pharisee, that boldly came up near, in a confidence of his own eminency in holiness. Whereas, if they saw their vileness, they would be more like the publican, that "stood afar off, and durst not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven; but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner." It becomes such sinful creatures as we, to approach a holy God (although with faith, and without terror, yet) with contrition, and penitent shame and confusion of face. It is foretold that this should be the disposition of the church, in the time of her highest privileges on earth in her latter day of glory, when God should remarkably comfort her, by revealing his covenant mercy to her, Ezek. xvi. 60, to the end. "I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant. Then thou shalt remember thy ways and be ashamed.....And I will establish my covenant with thee, and thou shalt know that I am the Lord; that thou mayst remember and be confounded and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God." The woman that we read of in the 7th chapter of Luke, that was an eminent saint, and had much of that true love which casts out fear, by Christ's own testimony, ver. 47, she approached Christ in an amiable and acceptable manner, when she came with that humble modesty, reverence and shame, when she stood at his feet, weeping behind him, as not being fit to appear before his face, and washed his feet with her tears.

One reason why gracious affections are attended with this tenderness of spirit which has been spoken of, is, that true grace tends to promote convictions of conscience. Persons are wont to have convictions of conscience before they have any grace: And if afterwards they are truly converted, and have true repentance, and joy, and peace in believing; this has a tendency to put an end to terrors, but has no tendency to put an end to convictions of sin but to increase them. It

does not stupify a man's conscience; but makes it more sensible, more easily and thoroughly discerning the sinfulness of that which is sinful, and receiving a greater conviction of the heinous and dreadful nature of sin, susceptive of a quicker and deeper sense of it, and more convinced of his own sinfulness, and wickedness of his heart; and consequently it has a tendency to make him more jealous of his heart. Grace tends to give the soul a further and better conviction of the same things concerning sin, that it was convinced of, under a legal work of the Spirit of God; viz. its great contrariety to the will, and law, and honor of God, the greatness of God's hatred of it, and displeasure against it, and the dreadful punishment it exposes to and deserves. And not only so, but it convinces the soul of something further concerning sin, that it saw nothing of, while only under legal convictions; and that is the infinitely hateful nature of sin, and its dreadfulness upon that account. And this makes the heart tender with respect to sin; like David's heart, that smote him when he had cut off Saul's skirt. The heart of a true penitent is like a burnt child that dreads the fire. Whereas, on the contrary, he that has had a counterfeit repentance, and false comforts and joys, is like iron that has been suddenly heat and quenched; it becomes much harder than before. A false conversion puts an end to convictions of conscience; and so either takes away, or much diminishes that conscientiousness, which was manifested under a work of the law.

All gracious affections have a tendency to promote this Christian tenderness of heart, that has been spoken of; not only a godly sorrow, but also a gracious joy, Psal. ii. 11. "Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling." As also a gracious hope, Psal. xxxiii. 18. "Behold the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him; upon them that hope in his mercy." And Psal. cxlvii. 11. "The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy." Yea, the most confident and assured hope, that is truly gracious, has this tendency. The higher an holy hope is raised, the more there is of this Christian tenderness. The banishing of a servile fear, by a holy assurance, is attended with a propor-

tionable increase of a reverential fear. The diminishing of the fear of the fruits of God's displeasure in future punishment, is attended with a proportionable increase of fear of his displeasure itself; the diminishing of the fear of hell, with an increase of the fear of sin. The vanishing of jealousies of the person's state, is attended with a proportional increase of jealousy of his heart, in a distrust of its strength, wisdom, stability, faithfulness, &c. The less apt he is to be afraid of natural evil, having his heart fixed, trusting in God, and so not afraid of evil tidings; the more apt he is to be alarmed with the appearance of moral evil, or the evil of sin. As he has more holy boldness, so he has less of selfconfidence, and a forward assuming boldness, and more modesty. As he is more sure than others of deliverance from hell, so he has more of a sense of the desert of it. He is less apt than others to be shaken in faith; but more apt than others to be moved with solemn warnings, and with God's frowns, and with the calamities of others. He has the firmest comfort, but the softest heart: Richer than others, but poorest of all in spirit: The tallest and strongest saint, but the least and tenderest child among them.

X. Another thing wherein those affections that are truly gracious and holy, differ from those that are false, is beautiful symmetry and proportion.

Not that the symmetry of the virtues, and gracious affections of the saints, in this life is perfect: It oftentimes is in many things defective, through the imperfection of grace, for want of proper instructions, through errors in judgment, or some particular unhappiness of natural temper, or defects in education, and many other disadvantages that might be mentioned. But yet there is, in no wise, that monstrous disproportion in gracious affections, and the various parts of true religion in the saints, that is very commonly to be observed, in the false religion, and counterfeit graces, of hypocrites.

In the truly holy affections of the saints is found that proportion, which is the natural consequence of the universality of their sanctification. They have the whole image of Christ upon them: They have put off the old man, and have put on

the new man entire in all its parts and members. It hath pleased the Father that in Christ all fullness should dwell: There is in him every grace; he is full of grace and truth: And they that are Christ's, do, "of his fullness receive grace for grace; (John i. 14. 16.) i. e. there is every grace in them which is in Christ; grace for grace; that is, grace answerable to grace: There is no grace in Christ, but there is its image in believers to answer it: The image is a true image; and there is something of the same beautiful proportion in the image, which is in the original; there is feature for feature, and member for member. There is symmetry and beauty in God's workmanship. The natural body, which God hath made, consists of many members; and all are in a beautiful proportion: So it is in the new man, consisting of various graces and affections. The body of one that was born a perfect child, may fail of exact proportion through distemper, and the weakness and wounds of some of its members; yet the disproportion is in no measure like that of those that are born monsters.

It is with hypocrites, as it was with Ephraim of old, at a time when God greatly complains of their hypocrisy, Hos. vii. "Ephraim is a cake not turned," half roasted and half raw: There is commonly no manner of uniformity in their affections.

There is in many of them a great partiality with regard to the several kinds of religious affections; great affections in some things, and no manner of proportion in others. An holy hope and holy fear go together in the saints, as has been observed from Psal. xxxiii. 18, and cxlvii. 11. But in some of these is the most confident hope, while they are void of reverence, selfjealousy and caution, to a great degree cast off fear. In the saints, joy and holy fear go together, though the joy be never so great: As it was with the disciples, in that joyful morning of Christ's resurrection, Matth. xxviii. 8. "And they departed quickly from the sepulchre, with fear and great joy."* But many of these rejoice without tremb-

* "Renewed care and diligence follows the sealings of the Spirit. Now is the soul at the foot of Christ, as Mary was at the sepulchre, with fear and

ling: Their joy is of that sort, that it is truly opposite to godly fear.

But particularly, one great difference between saints and hypocrites is this, that the joy and comfort of the former is attended with godly sorrow and mourning for sin. They have not only sorrow to prepare them for their first comfort, but after they are comforted, and their joy established. As it is foretold of the church of God, that they should mourn and loath themselves for their sins, after they were returned from the captivity, and were settled in the land of Canaan, the land of rest, and the land that flows with milk and honey, Ezek. xx. 42, 43. "And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I shall bring you into the land of Israel, into the country for the which I lifted up mine hand to give it to your fathers. And there shall ye remember your ways, and all your doings, wherein ye have been defiled, and ye shall loath yourselves in your own sight, for all your evils that ye have committed." As also in Ezek. xvi. 61, 62, 63. A true saint is like a little child in this respect; he never had any godly sorrow before he was born again; but since has it often in exercise: As a little child, before it is born, and while it remains in darkness, never cries; but as soon as it sees the light, it begins to cry; and thenceforward is often crying. Although Christ hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows, so that we are freed from the sorrow of punishment, and may now sweetly feed upon the comforts Christ hath purchased for us; yet that hinders not but that our feeding on these comforts should be attended with the sorrow of repentance. As of old, the children of Israel were commanded, evermore to feed upon the paschal lamb, with bitter herbs. True saints are spoken of in scripture, not only as those that have mourned for sin, but as those that do mourn, whose manner it is still to mourn, Matth. v. 4. "Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted."

Not only is there often in hypocrites an essential deficiency as to the various kinds of religious affections, but also a

great joy. He that travels the road with a rich treasure about him, is afraid of a thief in every bush." *Flavel's Sacramental Meditations*, Med. 4.

strange partiality and disproportion, in the same affections, with regard to different objects.

Thus, as to the affection of love, some make high pretences, and a great shew of love to God and Christ, and it may be, have been greatly affected with what they have heard or thought concerning them: But they have not a spirit of love and benevolence towards men, but are disposed to contention, envy, revenge, and evil speaking; and will, it may be, suffer an old grudge to rest in their bosoms towards a neighbor, for seven years together, if not twice seven years; living in real ill will and bitterness of spirit towards him: And it may be in their dealings with their neighbors, are not very strict and conscientious in observing the rule of "doing to others as they would that they should do to them." And, on the other hand, there are others that appear as if they had a great deal of benevolence to men, are very good natured and generous in their way, but have no love to God.

And as to love to men, there are some that have flowing affections to some; but their love is far from being of so extensive and universal a nature, as a truly Christian love is. They are full of dear affections to some, and full of bitterness towards others. They are knit to their own party, them that approve of them, love them and admire them; but are fierce against those that oppose and dislike them. Mat. v. 45, 46. "Be like your father, which is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil, and on the good. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same?" Some shew a great affection to their neighbors, and pretend to be ravished with the company of the children of God abroad; and at the same time are uncomfortable and churlish towards their wives and other near relations at home, and are very negligent of relative duties. And as to the great love to sinners and opposers of religion, and the great concern for their souls, that there is an appearance of in some, even to extreme distress and agony, singling out a particular person, from among a multitude, for its object, there being at the same time no general compassion to sinners, that are in equally miserable circumstances, but what is in a

monstrous disproportion; this seems not to be of the nature of gracious affection. Not that I suppose it to be at all strange, that pity to the perishing souls of sinners should be to a degree of agony, if other things are answerable: Or that a truly gracious compassion to souls should be exercised much more to some persons than others that are equally miserable, especially on some particular occasions: There may many things happen to fix the mind, and affect the heart, with respect to a particular person, at such a juncture; and without doubt some saints have been in great distress for the souls of particular persons, so as to be as it were in travail for them; but when persons appear, at particular times, in racking agonies for the soul of some single person, far beyond what has been usually heard or read of in eminent saints, but appear to be persons that have a spirit of meek and fervent love, charity, and compassion to mankind in general, in a far less degree than they: I say, such agonies are greatly to be suspected, for reasons already given; viz. that the Spirit of God is wont to give graces and gracious affections in a beautiful symmetry and proportion.

And as there is a monstrous disproportion in the love of some, in its exercises towards different persons, so there is in their seeming exercises of love towards the same persons.... Some men shew a love to others as to their outward man, they are liberal of their worldly substance, and often give to the poor; but have no love to, or concern for the souls of men. Others pretend a great love to men's souls, that are not compassionate and charitable towards their bodies. The making a great shew of love, pity and distress for souls, costs them nothing; but in order to shew mercy to men's bodies, they must part with money out of their pockets. But a true Christian love to our brethren extends both to their souls and bodies; and herein is like the love and compassion of Jesus Christ. He shewed mercy to men's souls, by laboring for them in preaching the gospel to them; and shewed mercy to their bodies, in going about doing good, healing all manner of sickness and diseases among the people. We have a remarkable instance of Christ's having compassion at once both to

men's souls and bodies, and shewing compassion by feeding both, in Mark vi. 34, &c. "And Jesus when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion towards them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things." Here was his compassion to their souls. And in the sequel we have an account of his compassion to their bodies, because they had been a long while having nothing to eat; he fed five thousand of them with five loaves and two fishes. And if the compassion of professing Christians towards others does not work in the same ways, it is a sign that it is no true Christian compassion.

And furthermore, it is a sign that affections are not of the right sort, if persons seem to be much affected with the bad qualities of their fellow Christians, as the coldness and lifelessness of other saints, but are in no proportion affected with their own defects and corruptions. A true Christian may be affected with the coldness and unsavoriness of other saints, and may mourn much over it: But at the same time, he is not so apt to be affected with the badness of any body's heart, as his own; this is most in his view; this he is most quick-sighted to discern; this he sees most of the aggravations of, and is most ready to lament. And a less degree of virtue will bring him to pity himself, and be concerned at his own calamities, than rightly to be affected with others' calamities. And if men have not attained to the less, we may determine they never attained to the greater.

And here by the way, I would observe, that it may be laid down as a general rule, that if persons pretend that they come to high attainments in religion, but have never yet arrived to the less attainments, it is a sign of a vain pretence. As if persons pretend, that they have got beyond mere morality, to live a spiritual and divine life; but really have not come to be so much as moral persons: Or pretend to be greatly affected with the wickedness of their hearts, and are not affected with the palpable violations of God's commands in their practice, which is a less attainment: Or if they pretend to be brought to be even willing to be damned for the glory of God,

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but have no forwardness to suffer a little in their estates and names, and worldly convenience, for the sake of their duty; or pretend that they are not afraid to venture their souls upon Christ, and commit their all to God, trusting to his bare word, and the faithfulness of his promises, for their eternal welfare; but at the same time, have not confidence enough in God, to dare to trust him with a little of their estates, bestowed to pious and charitable uses; I say, when it is thus with persons, their pretences are manifestly vain. He that is in a journey, and imagines he has got far beyond such a place in his road, and never yet came to it, must be mistaken; and he is not yet arrived to the top of the hill, that never yet got half way thither. But this by the way.

The same that has been observed of the affection of love, is also to be observed of other religious affections. Those that are true, extend in some proportion to the various things that are their due and proper objects; but when they are false, they are commonly strangely disproportionate. So it is with religious desires and longings: These in the saints, are to those things that are spiritual and excellent in general, and that in some proportion to their excellency, importance or necessity, or their near concern in them; but in false longings it is often far otherwise. They will strangely run, with an impatient vehemence, after something of less importance, when other things of greater importance are neglected.... Thus for instance, some persons, from time to time, are attended with a vehement inclination, and unaccountably violent pressure, to declare to others what they experience, and to exhort others; when there is, at the same time, no inclination, in any measure equal to it, to other things, that true Christianity has as great, yea, a greater tendency to; as the pouring out the soul before God in secret, earnest prayer and praise to him, and more conformity to him, and living more to his glory, &c. We read in scripture of "groanings that cannot be uttered, and soul breakings for the longing it hath, and longings, thirstings, and pantings," much more frequently to these latter things, than the former.

And so as to hatred and zeal; when these are from right principles, they are against sin in general, in some proportion to the degree of sinfulness, Psal. cxix. 104. "I hate every false way." So ver. 128. But a false hatred and zeal against sin, is against some particular sin only. Thus some seem to be very zealous against profaneness, and pride in apparel, who themselves are notorious for covetousness, closeness, and it may be backbiting, envy towards superiors, turbulency of spirit towards rulers, and rooted ill will to them that have injured them. False zeal is against the sins of others, while men have no zeal against their own sins. But he that has true zeal, exercises it chiefly against his own sins; though he shews also a proper zeal against prevailing and dangerous iniquity in others. And some pretend to have a great abhorrence of their own sins of heart, and cry out much of their inward corruption; and yet make light of sins in practice, and seem to commit them without much restraint or remorse; though these imply sin both in heart and life.

As there is a much greater disproportion in the exercises of false affections than of true, as to different objects, so there is also, as to different times. For although true Christians are not always alike; yea, there is very great difference, at different times, and the best have reason to be greatly ashamed of their unsteadiness; yet there is in no wise that instability and inconstancy in the hearts of those who are true virgins, "that follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth," which is in false hearted professors. The righteous man is truly said to be one whose heart is fixed, trusting in God, Psal. cxii. 7, and to have his heart established with grace, Heb. xiii. 9, and to hold on his way, Job. xvii. 9. "The righteous shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall wax stronger and stronger." It is spoken of as a note of the hypocrisy of the Jewish church, that they were as a swift dromedary, traversing her ways.

If therefore persons are religious only by fits and starts; if they now and then seem to be raised up to the clouds in their affections, and then suddenly fall down again, lose all,

and become quite careless and carnal, and this is their manner of carrying on religion; if they appear greatly moved, and mightily engaged in religion, only in extraordinary seasons, in the time of a remarkable outpouring of the Spirit, or other uncommon dispensation of providence, or upon the real or supposed receipt of some great mercy, when they have received some extraordinary temporal mercy, or suppose that they are newly converted, or have lately had what they call a great discovery; but quickly return to such a frame, that their hearts are chiefly upon other things, and the prevailing bent of their hearts and stream of their affections, is ordinarily towards the things of this world; when they are like the children of Israel in the wilderness, who had their affections highly raised by what God had done for them at the Red Sea, and sang his praise, and soon fell a lusting after the fleshpots of Egypt; but then again when they came to mount Sinai, and saw the great manifestations God made of himself there, seemed to be greatly engaged again, and mightily forward to enter into covenant with God, saying, "All that the Lord hath spoken will we do, and be obedient," but then quickly made them a golden calf; I say, when it is thus with persons, it is a sign of the unsoundness of their affections.* They are

* Dr. Owen (on the Spirit, Book III. Chap. ii. Sect. 18.) speaking of a common work of the Spirit, says, "This work operates greatly on the affections: We have given instances, in fear, sorrow, joy and delight, about spiritual things, that are stirred up and acted thereby: But yet it comes short in two things, of a thorough work upon the affections themselves. For 1st. It doth not fix them. And 2dly. It doth not fill them."

"There is (says Dr. Preston) a certain love, by fits, which God accepts not; when men come and offer to God great promises, like the waves of the sea, as big as mountains: Oh, they think they will do much for God! But their minds change; and they become as those high waves, which at last fall level with the other waters."

Mr. Flavel, speaking of these changeable professors, says, "These professors have more of the moon than of the sun: Little light, less heat, and many changes. They deceive many, yea, they deceive themselves, but cannot deceive God. They want that ballast and establishment in themselves, that would have kept them tight and steady." *Touchstone of Sincerity*, Chap. II. Sect. 2.

like the waters in the time of a shower of rain, which, during the shower, and a little after, run like a brook, and flow abundantly; but are presently quite dry; and when another shower comes, then they will flow again. Whereas a true saint is like a stream from a living spring; which, though it may be greatly increased by a shower of rain, and diminished in time of drought, yet constantly runs, John iv. 14. "The water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up," &c. or like a tree planted by such a stream, that has a constant supply at the root, and is always green, even in time of the greatest drought, Jer. xvii. 7, 8. "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green, and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit." Many hypocrites are like comets that appear for a while with a mighty blaze; but are very unsteady and irregular in their motion (and are therefore called wandering stars, Jude 13) and their blaze soon disappears, and they appear but once in a great while. But the true saints are like the fixed stars, which, though they rise and set, and are often clouded, yet are stedfast in their orb, and may truly be said to shine with a constant light. Hypocritical affections are like a violent motion; like that of the air that is moved with winds, (Jude 12) but gracious affections are more a natural motion; like the stream of a river, which, though it has many turns hither and thither, and may meet with obstacles, and runs more freely and swiftly in some places than others; yet in the general, with a steady and constant course, tends the same way, until it gets to the ocean.

And as there is a strange unevenness and disproportion in false affections, at different times; so there often is in different places. Some are greatly affected from time to time, when in company; but have nothing that bears any manner of proportion to it in secret, in close meditation, secret prayer, and conversing with God, when alone, and separated from all

the world.* A true Christian doubtless delights in religious fellowship, and Christian conversation, and finds much to affect his heart in it; but he also delights at times to retire from all mankind, to converse with God in solitary places. And this also has its peculiar advantages for fixing his heart, and engaging its affections. True religion disposes persons to be much alone in solitary places, for holy meditation and prayer. So it wrought in Isaac, Gen. xxiv. 63. And which is much more, so it wrought in Jesus Christ. How often do we read of his retiring into mountains and solitary places, for holy converse with his Father? It is difficult to conceal great affections, but yet gracious affections are of a much more silent and secret nature, than those that are counterfeit. So it is with the gracious sorrow of the saints. So it is with their sorrow for their own sins. Thus the future gracious mourning of true penitents, at the beginning of the latter day glory, is represented as being so secret, as to be hidden from the companions of their bosom, Zech. xii. 12, 13, 14. "And the land shall mourn, every family apart, the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart: The family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart: The family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart: The family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart: All the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart." So it is

* "The Lord is neglected secretly, yet honored openly; because there is no wind in their chambers to blow their sails; and therefore there they stand still. Hence many men keep their profession, when they lose their affection. They have by the one a name to live (and that is enough) though their hearts be dead. And hence so long as you love and commend them, so long they love you; but if not, they will forsake you. They were warm only by another's fire, and hence, having no principle of life within, soon grow dead. This is the water that turns a Pharisee's mill." *Shepard's Parable*, Part I. p. 180.

"The hypocrite (says Mr. Flavel) is not for the closet, but the synagogue, Mat. vi. 5, 6. It is not his meat and drink to retire from the clamor of the world, to enjoy God in secret." *Touckstone of Sincerity*, Chap. vii. Sect. 2.

Dr. Ames, in his Cases of Conscience, Lib. III. Chap. v. speaks of it as a thing by which sincerity may be known, "That persons be obedient in the absence, as well as in the presence of lookers on; in secret, as well, yea more, than in public;" alledging Phil. ii. 12, and Mat. vi. 6.

with their sorrow for the sins of others. The saints' pains and travailing for the souls of sinners are chiefly in secret places, Jer. xiii. 17. "If ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride, and mine eye shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because the Lord's flock is carried away captive." So it is with gracious joys: They are hidden manna, in this respect, as well as others, Rev. ii. 17.

The Psalmist seems to speak of his sweetest comforts, as those that were to be had in secret, Psal. lxiii. 5, 6. "My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips: When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches." Christ calls forth his spouse, away from the world, into retired places, that he may give her his sweetest love, Cant. vii. 11, 12. "Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field; let us lodge in the villages: There I will give thee my loves." The most eminent divine favors that the saints obtained, that we read of in scripture, were in their retirement. The principal manifestations that God made of himself, and his covenant mercy to Abraham, were when he was alone, apart from his numerous family; as any one will judge that carefully reads his history. Isaac received that special gift of God to him, Rebekah, who was so great a comfort to him, and by whom he obtained the promised seed, walking alone, meditating in the field. Jacob was retired for secret prayer, when Christ came to him, and he wrestled with him, and obtained the blessing. God revealed himself to Moses in the bush, when he was in a solitary place in the desert, in Mount Horeb, Exod. iii. at the beginning. And afterwards, when God shewed him his glory, and he was admitted to the highest degree of communion with God that ever he enjoyed; he was alone, in the same mountain, and continued there forty days and forty nights, and then came down with his face shining. God came to those great prophets, Elijah and Elisha, and conversed freely with them, chiefly in their retirement. Elijah conversed alone with God at mount Sinai, as Moses did. And when Jesus Christ had his greatest prelibation of his future glory, when he was transfigured; it was not

when he was with the multitude, or with the twelve disciples, but retired into a solitary place in a mountain, with only three select disciples, charging them that they should tell no man, until he was risen from the dead. When the angel Gabriel came to the blessed virgin, and when the Holy Ghost came upon her, and the power of the highest overshadowed her, she seems to have been alone, and to be in this matter hid from the world; her nearest and dearest earthly friend Joseph, that had betrothed her (though a just man) knew nothing of the matter. And she that first partook of the joy of Christ's resurrection, was alone with Christ at the sepulchre, John xx. And when the beloved disciple was favored with those wonderful visions of Christ and his future dispensations towards the church and the world, he was alone in the isle of Patmos. Not but that we have also instances of great privileges that the saints have received when with others; or that there is not much in Christian conversation, and social and public worship, tending greatly to refresh and rejoice the hearts of the saints. But this is all that *I aim* at by what has been said, to shew that it is the nature of true grace, that however it loves Christian society in its place, yet it in a peculiar manner delights in retirement, and secret converse with God. So that if persons appear greatly engaged in social religion, and but little in the religion of the closet, and are often highly affected when with others, and but little moved when they have none but God and Christ to converse with, it looks very darkly upon their religion.

XI. Another great and very distinguishing difference between gracious affections and others is, that gracious affections, the higher they are raised, the more is a spiritual appetite and longing of soul after spiritual attainments increased. On the contrary, false affections rest satisfied in themselves.*

The more a true saint loves God with a gracious love, the more he desires to love him, and the more uneasy is he at his

* "Truly there is no work of Christ that is right (says Mr. Shepherd) but it carries the soul to long for more of it." *Parable of the Ten Virgins*, Part I. p. 136.

want of love to him; the more he hates sin, the more he desires to hate it, and laments that he has so much remaining love to it; the more he mourns for sin, the more he longs to mourn for sin; the more his heart is broke, the more he desires it should be broke: The more he thirsts and longs after God and holiness, the more he longs to long, and breathe out his very soul in longings after God: The kindling and raising of gracious affections is like kindling a flame; the higher it is raised, the more ardent it is; and the more it burns, the more vehemently does it tend and seek to burn. So that the spiritual appetite after holiness, and an increase of holy affections, is much more lively and keen in those that are eminent in holiness, than others; and more when grace and holy affections are in their most lively exercise, than at other times. It is as much the nature of one that is spiritually new born, to thirst after growth in holiness, as it is the nature of a new born babe to thirst after the mother's breast; who has the sharpest appetite, when best in health, 1 Pet. ii. 2, 3. "As new born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious." The most that the saints have in this world, is but a taste, a prelibation of that future glory which is their proper fulness; it is only an earnest of their future inheritance in their hearts, 2 Cor. i. 22, and v. 5, and Eph. i. 14. The most eminent saints in this state are but children, compared with their future, which is their proper state of maturity and perfection; as the apostle observes, 1 Cor. xiii. 10, 11. The greatest eminency that the saints arrive to in this world, has no tendency to satiety, or to abate their desires after more; but, on the contrary, makes them more eager to press forwards; as is evident by the apostle's words, Phil. iii. 13, 14, 15. "Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press towards the mark.....Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded."

The reasons of it are, that the more persons have of holy affections, the more they have of that spiritual taste which I have spoken of elsewhere; whereby they perceive the ex-

cellency, and relish the divine sweetness of holiness. And the more grace they have, while in this state of imperfection, the more they see their imperfection and emptiness, and distance from what ought to be: And so the more do they see their need of grace; as I shewed at large before, when speaking of the nature of evangelical humiliation. And besides, grace, as long as it is imperfect, is of a growing nature, and in a growing state. And we see it to be so with all living things, that while they are in a state of imperfection, and in their growing state, their nature seeks after growth; and so much the more, as they are more healthy and prosperous. Therefore the cry of every true grace, is like that cry of true faith, Mark ix. 24. "Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief." And the greater spiritual discoveries and affections the true Christian has, the more does he become an earnest beggar for grace, and spiritual food, that he may grow; and the more earnestly does he pursue after it, in the use of proper means and endeavors; for true and gracious longings after holiness are no idle ineffectual desires.

But here some may object and say, How is this consistent with what all allow, that spiritual enjoyments are of a soul satisfying nature?

I answer, its being so, will appear to be not at all inconsistent with what has been said, if it be considered in what manner spiritual enjoyments are said to be of a soul satisfying nature. Certainly they are not so in that sense, that they are of so cloying a nature, that he who has any thing of them, though but in a very imperfect degree, desires no more. But spiritual enjoyments are of a soul satisfying nature in the following respects. 1. They in their kind and nature, are fully adapted to the nature, capacity, and need of the soul of man. So that those who find them, desire no other kind of enjoyments; they sit down fully contented with that kind of happiness which they have, desiring no change, nor inclining to wander about any more, saying, "Who will shew us any good?" The soul is never cloyed, never weary; but perpetually giving up itself, with all its powers, to this happiness. But not that those who have something of this happiness, de-

sire no more of the same. 2. They are satisfying also in this respect, that they answer the expectation of the appetite. When the appetite is high to any thing, the expectation is consequently so. Appetite to a particular object, implies expectation in its nature. This expectation is not satisfied by worldly enjoyments; the man expected to have a great accession of happiness, but he is disappointed. But it is not so with spiritual enjoyments; they fully answer and satisfy the expectation. 3. The gratification and pleasure of spiritual enjoyments is permanent. It is not so with worldly enjoyments. They in a sense satisfy particular appetites: But the appetite, in being satisfied, is glutted, and then the pleasure is over: And as soon as that is over, the general appetite of human nature after happiness returns; but is empty, and without any thing to satisfy it. So that the glutting of a particular appetite, does but take away from, and leave empty, the general thirst of nature. 4. Spiritual good is satisfying, as there is enough in it to satisfy the soul, as to degree, if obstacles were but removed, and the enjoying faculty duly applied. There is room enough here for the soul to extend itself; here is an infinite ocean of it. If men be not satisfied here, in degree of happiness, the cause iswith themselves; it is because they do not open their mouths wide enough.

But these things do not argue that a soul has no appetite excited after more of the same, that has tasted a little; or that his appetite will not increase, the more he tastes, until he comes to fulness of enjoyment: As bodies that are attracted to the globe of the earth, tend to it more strongly, the nearer they come to the attracting body, and are not at rest out of the center. Spiritual good is of a satisfying nature; and for that very reason, the soul that tastes, and knows its nature, will thirst after it, and a fulness of it, that it may be satisfied. And the more he experiences, and the more he knows this excellent, unparalleled, exquisite, and satisfying sweetness, the more earnestly will he hunger and thirst for more, until he comes to perfection. And therefore this is the nature of spiritual affections that the greater they be, the greater the appetite and longing is, after grace and holiness.

But with those joys, and other religious affections, that are false and counterfeit, it is otherwise. If before, there was a great desire, of some sort, after grace; as these affections rise, that desire ceases, or is abated. It may be before, while the man was under legal convictions, and much afraid of hell, he earnestly longed that he might obtain spiritual light in his understanding, and faith in Christ, and love to God: But now, when these false affections are risen, that deceive him, and make him confident that he is converted, and his state good, there are no more earnest longings after light and grace; for his end is answered; he is confident that his sins are forgiven him, and that he shall go to heaven; and so he is satisfied. And especially when false affections are raised very high, they put an end to longings after grace and holiness. The man now is far from appearing to himself a poor empty creature; on the contrary, he is rich, and increased with goods, and hardly conceives of any thing more excellent than what he has already attained to.

Hence there is an end to many persons' earnestness in seeking, after they have once obtained that which they call their conversion; or at least, after they have had those high affections, that make them fully confident of it. Before, while they looked upon themselves as in a state of nature, they were engaged in seeking after God and Christ, and cried earnestly for grace, and strove in the use of means: But now they act as though they thought their work was done; they live upon their first work, or some high experiences that are past; and there is an end to their crying, and striving after God and grace. Whereas the holy principles that actuate a true saint, have a far more powerful influence to stir him up to earnestness in seeking God and holiness, than servile fear. Hence seeking God is spoken of as one of the distinguishing characters of the saints; and those that seek God is one of the names by which the godly are called in scripture, Psal. xxiv. 6, "This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob. Psal. lxix. 6. Let not those that seek thee, be confounded for my sake, ver. 32. The humble shall see this and be glad: And your heart shall live that seek God.

And lxx. 4. Let all those that seek thee, rejoice, and be glad in thee: And let such as love thy salvation say continually, "The Lord be magnified." And the scriptures every where represent the seeking, striving, and labor of a Christian, as being chiefly after his conversion, and his conversion as being but the beginning of his work. And almost all that is said in the New Testament, of men's watching, giving earnest heed to themselves, running the race that is set before them, striving, and agonizing, wrestling not with flesh and blood, but principalities and powers, fighting, putting on the whole armor of God, and standing, having done all to stand, pressing forward, reaching forth, continuing instant in prayer, crying to God day and night; I say, almost all that is said in the New Testament of these things, is spoken of, and directed to the saints. Where these things are applied to sinners' seeking conversion once, they are spoken of the saints, prosecution of the great business of their high calling ten times. But many in these days have got into a strange antiscriptural way, of having all their striving and wrestling over before they are converted; and so having an easy time of it afterwards, to sit down and enjoy their sloth and indolence; as those that now have a supply of their wants, and are become rich and full. But when the Lord "fills the hungry with good things, these rich are like to be sent away empty." Luke i. 53.

But doubtless there are some hypocrites, that have only false affections, who will think they are able to stand this trial; and will readily say, that they desire not to rest satisfied with past attainments, but to be pressing forward, they do desire more, they long after God and Christ, and desire more holiness, and do seek it. But the truth is, their desires are not properly the desires of appetite after holiness, for its own sake, or for the moral excellency and holy sweetness that is in it; but only for by ends. They long after clearer discoveries, that they may be better satisfied about the state of their souls; or because in great discoveries self is gratified, in being made so much of by God, and so exalted above others; they long to taste the love of God (as they call it) more than to have more love to God. Or, it may be, they have a kind

of forced, fancied, or made longings; because they think they must long for more grace, otherwise it will be a dark sign upon them. But such things as these are far different from the natural, and as it were necessary appetite and thirsting of the new man, after God and holiness. There is an inward burning desire that a saint has after holiness, as natural to the new creature, as vital heat is to the body. There is a holy breathing and panting after the Spirit of God, to increase holiness, as natural to a holy nature as breathing is to a living body. And holiness or sanctification is more directly the object of it, than any manifestation of God's love and favor. This is the meat and drink that is the object of the spiritual appetite, John iv. 34. "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." Where we read in scripture of the desires, longings, and thirstings of the saints, righteousness and God's laws are much more frequently mentioned, as the object of them, than any thing else. The saints desire the sincere milk of the word, not so much to testify God's love to them, as that they may grow thereby in holiness. *I* have shewn before, that holiness is that good which is the immediate object of a spiritual taste. But undoubtedly the same sweetness that is the chief object of a spiritual taste, is also the chief object of a spiritual appetite. Grace is the godly man's treasure, Isa. xxxiii. 6. "The fear of the Lord is his treasure." Godliness is the gain that he is covetous and greedy of. 1 Tim. vi. 6. Hypocrites long for discoveries, more for the present comfort of the discovery, and the high manifestation of God's love in it, than for any sanctifying influence of it. But neither a longing after great discoveries, or after great tastes of the love of God, nor longing to be in heaven, nor longing to die, are in any measure so distinguishing marks of true saints, as longing after a more holy heart, and living a more holy life.

But I am come now to the last distinguishing mark of holy affections that I shall mention.

XII. Gracious and holy affections have their exercise and fruit in Christian practice.....I mean, they have that influence and power upon him who is the subject of them, that they

cause that a practice, which is universally conformed to, and directed by Christian rules, should be the practice and business of his life.

This implies three things; 1. That his behavior or practice in the world, be universally conformed to, and directed by Christian rules. 2. That he makes a business of such a holy practice above all things; that it be a business which he is chiefly engaged in, and devoted to, and pursues with highest earnestness and diligence: So that he may be said to make this practice of religion eminently his work and business. And 3. That he persists in it to the end of life: So that it may be said, not only to be his business at certain seasons, the business of Sabbath days, or certain extraordinary times, or the business of a month, or a year, or of seven years, or his business under certain circumstances; but the business of his life; it being that business which he perseveres in through all changes, and under all trials, as long as he lives.

The necessity of each of these, in all true Christians, is most clearly and fully taught in the word of God.

1. It is necessary that men should be universally obedient, 1John iii. 3, &c. "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.....And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not; whosoever sinneth, hath not seen him, neither known him. He that doth righteousness, is righteous even as he is righteous: He that committeth sin is of the devil, chap. v. 18. We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not, but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not. John xv. 14. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

If one member only be corrupt, and we do not cut it off, it will carry the whole body to hell, Matth. v. 29, 30. Saul was commanded to slay all God's enemies, the Amalekites; and he slew all but Agag, and the saving him alive proved his ruin. Caleb and Joshua entered into God's promised rest, because they wholly followed the Lord, Numb. xiv. 24, and xxxii. 11, 12. Deut. 1. 36. Josh. xiv. 6, 8, 9, 14. Naaman's hypocrisy appeared in that, however, he seemed to be greatly affected

with gratitude to God for healing his leprosy, and engaged to serve him, yet in one thing he desired to be excused. And Herod, though he feared John, and observed him, and heard him gladly, and did many things; yet was condemned, in that in one thing he would not hearken to him, even in parting with his beloved Herodias. So that it is necessary that men should part with their dearest iniquities, which are as their right hand and right eyes, sins that most easily beset them, and which they are most exposed to by their natural inclinations, evil customs, or particular circumstances, as well as others. As Joseph would not make known himself to his brethren who had sold him, until Benjamin the beloved child of the family, that was most hardly parted with, was delivered up; no more will Christ reveal his love to us, until we part with our dearest lusts, and until we are brought to comply with the most difficult duties, and those that we have the greatest aversion to.

And it is of importance that it should be observed, that in order to a man's being truly said to be universally obedient, his obedience must not only consist in negatives, or in universally avoiding wicked practices, consisting in sins of commission, but he must also be universal in the positives of religion. Sins of omission are as much breaches of God's commands, as sins of commission. Christ, in Matth. xxv. represents those on the left hand as being condemned and cursed to everlasting fire for sins of omission. "I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat," &c. A man, therefore, cannot be said to be universally obedient, and of a Christian conversation, only because he is no thief, nor oppressor, nor fraudulent person, nor drunkard, nor tavern haunter, nor whoremaster, nor rioter, nor night walker, nor unclean, nor profane in his language, nor slanderer, nor liar, nor furious, nor malicious, nor reviler. He is falsely said to be of a conversation that becomes the gospel, who goes thus far and no farther; but in order to this, it is necessary that he should also be of a serious, religious, devout, humble, meek, forgiving, peaceful, respectful, condescending, benevolent, merciful, charitable and beneficent walk and conversation. Without such things as these, he

does not obey the laws of Christ, and laws that he and his apostles did abundantly insist on, as of the greatest importance and necessity.

2. In order to men's being true Christians, it is necessary that they prosecute the business of religion, and the service of God with great earnestness and diligence, as the work which they devote themselves to, and make the main business of their lives. All Christ's peculiar people not only do good works, but are zealous of good works, Tit. ii. 14. No man can do the service of two masters at once. They that are God's true servants do give up themselves to his service, and make it as it were their whole work, therein employing their whole hearts, and the chief of their strength, Phil. iii. 13. "This one thing I do." Christians in their effectual calling, are not called to idleness, but to labor in God's vineyard, and spend their day in doing a great and laborious service. All true Christians comply with this call, (as is implied in its being an effectual call) and do the work of Christians; which is every where in the New Testament compared to those exercises wherein men are wont to exert their strength with the greatest earnestness, as running, wrestling, fighting. All true Christians are good and faithful soldiers of Jesus Christ, and "fight the good fight of faith;" for none but those who do so, do "ever lay hold on eternal life." Those who "fight as those that beat the air," never win the crown of victory. "They that run in a race, run all, but one wins the prize," and they that are slack and negligent in their course, do not "so run, as that they may obtain." The kingdom of heaven is not to be taken but by violence. Without earnestness there is no getting along, in that narrow way that leads to life; and so no arriving at that state of glorious life and happiness which it leads to. Without earnest labor there is no ascending the steep and high hill of Zion, and so no arriving at the heavenly city on the top of it. Without a constant laboriousness there is no stemming the swift stream in which we swim, so as ever to come to that fountain of water of life that is at the head of it. There is need that we should "watch and pray always," in order to our escaping those dreadful things that are coming on the

ungodly, and our being counted worthy to stand before the Son of man." There is need of our "putting on the whole armor of God, and doing all, to stand," in order to our avoiding a total overthrow, and being utterly destroyed by the fiery "darts of the devil." There is need that we should "forget the things that are behind, and be reaching forth to the things that are before, and pressing towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus our Lord," in order to our obtaining that prize. Slothfulness in the service of God in his professed servants, is as damning as open rebellion; for the slothful servant is a wicked servant, and shall be cast into outer darkness, among God's open enemies, Matth. xxv. 26, 30. They that are slothful are not "followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises, Heb. vi. 11, 12. And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope unto the end; that ye be not slothful, but followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises." And all they who follow that cloud of witnesses that are gone before to heaven, "do lay aside every weight, and the sin that easily besets them, and do run with patience the race that is set before them," Heb. xii. 1. That true faith, by which persons rely on the righteousness of Christ, and the work that he hath done for them, and do truly feed and live upon him, is evermore accompanied with such a spirit of earnestness in the Christian work and course. Which was typified of old, by the manner of the children of Israel's feeding on the paschal lamb; who were directed to eat it, as those that were in haste, with their loins girded, their shoes on their feet, and their staff in their hand, Exod. xii. 11.

3. Every true Christian perseveres in this way of universal obedience, and diligent and earnest service of God, through all the various kinds of trials that he meets with, to the end of life. That all true saints, all those that do obtain eternal life, do thus persevere in the practice of religion, and the service of God, is a doctrine so abundantly taught in the scripture, that particularly to rehearse all the texts which imply it would be

endless, I shall content myself with referring to some in the margin.*

But that in perseverance in obedience, which is chiefly insisted on in the scripture, as a special note of the truth of grace, is the continuance of professors in the practice of their duty, and being stedfast in an holy walk, through the various trials that they meet with.

By trials here, I mean those things that occur, and that a professor meets with in his course, that do especially render his continuance in his duty, and faithfulness to God, difficult to nature. These things are from time to time called in scripture by the name of trials, or temptations, (which are words of the same signification.) These are of various kinds: There are many things that render persons' continuance in the way of their duty difficult, by their tendency to cherish and foment, or to stir up and provoke their lusts and corruptions. Many things make it hard to continue in the way of their duty, by their being of an alluring nature, and having a tendency to entice persons to sin, or by their tendency to take off restraints, and embolden them in iniquity. Other things are trials of the soundness and stedfastness of professors, by their tendency to make their duty appear terrible to them, and so to affright and drive them from it; such as the sufferings which their duty will expose them to; pain, ill will, contempt, and reproach, or loss of outward possessions and comforts. If persons, after they have made a profession of religion, live any considerable time in this world, which is so full of changes, and so full of evil, it cannot be otherwise, than that they should meet with many trials of their sincerity and stedfastness. And besides, it is God's manner, in his

* Deut. v. 29. Deut. xxxii. 18, 19, 20. 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. Psal. lxxviii. 7, 8, 10, 11, 35, 36, 37, 41, 42, 56, &c. Psal. cvi. 3, 12—15. Psal. cxxv. 4, 5. Prov. xxvi. 11. Isa. lxiv. 5. Jer. xvii. 13. Ezek. iii. 20, and xviii. 24, and xxxiii. 12, 13. Matth. x. 22, and xiii. 4—8, with verses 19—23, and xxv. 8, and xxiv. 12, 13. Luke ix. 62, and xii. 35, &c. and xxii. 28, and xvii. 32. John viii. 30, 31, and xv. 6, 7, 8, 20, 16. Rom. ii. 7, and xi. 22. Col. i. 22, 23. Heb. iii. 6, 12, 14, and vi. 11, 12, and x. 35, &c. James i. 25. Rev. ii. 13, 26, and ii. 10. 1 Tim. ii. 15. 2 Tim. iv. 4—8.

providence, to bring trials on his professing friends and servants designedly, that he may manifest them, and may exhibit sufficient matter of conviction of the state which they are in, to their own consciences, and oftentimes to the world; as appears by innumerable scriptures.

True saints may be guilty of some kinds and degrees of backsliding, and may be foiled by particular temptations, and may fall into sin, yea great sins; but they can never fall away so as to grow weary of religion, and the service of God, and habitually to dislike it and neglect it, either on its own account, or on account of the difficulties that attend it; as is evident by Gal. vi. 9. Rom. ii. 7. Heb. x. 36. Isa. xliii. 22. Mal. i. 13. They can never backslide, so as to continue no longer in a way of universal obedience; or so, that it shall cease to be their manner to observe all the rules of Christianity, and do all duties required, even in the most difficult circumstances. This is abundantly manifest by the things that have been observed already. Nor can they ever fall away so as habitually to be more engaged in other things than in the business of religion; or so that it should become their way and manner to serve something else more than God; or so as statedly to cease to serve God, with such earnestness and diligence, as still to be habitually devoted and given up to the business of religion; unless those words of Christ can fall to the ground, "Ye cannot serve two masters," and those of the apostle, "He that will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God;" and unless a saint can change his God, and yet be a true saint. Nor can a true saint ever fall away so, that it shall come to this, that ordinarily there shall be no remarkable difference in his walk and behavior since his conversion, from what was before. They that are truly converted are new men, new creatures; new, not only within, but without; they are sanctified throughout, in spirit, soul, and body; old things are passed away, all things are become new; they have new hearts, and new eyes, new ears, new tongues, new hands, new feet; *i. e.* a new conversation and practice; and they walk in newness of life, and continue to do so to the end of life. And they that fall away, and cease visibly to do so, it is a sign they never were risen with Christ.

And especially when men's opinion of their being converted, and so in a safe estate, is the very cause of their coming to this, it is a most evident sign of their hypocrisy. And that, whether their falling away be into their former sins, or into some new kind of wickedness, having the corruption of nature only turned into a new channel, instead of its being mortified. As when persons that think themselves converted, though they do not return to former profaneness and lewdness; yet from the high opinion they have of their experiences, graces, and privileges, gradually settle more and more in a selfrighteous and spiritually proud temper of mind, and in such a manner of behavior as naturally arises therefrom. When it is thus with men, however far they may seem to be from their former evil practices, this alone is enough to condemn them, and may render their last state far worse than the first. For this seems to be the very case of the Jews of that generation that Christ speaks of, Matth. xii. 43, 44, 45, who being awakened by John the Baptist's preaching, and brought to a reformation of their former licentious courses, whereby the unclean spirit was as it were turned out, and the house swept and garnished; yet, being empty of God and of grace, became full of themselves, and were exalted in an exceeding high opinion of their own righteousness and eminent holiness, and became habituated to an answerably self exalting behavior; so changing the sins of publicans and harlots, for those of the Pharisees; and in issue, had seven devils, worse than the first.

Thus I have explained what exercise and fruit I mean, when I say, that gracious affections have their exercise and fruit in Christian practice.

The reason why gracious affections have such a tendency and effect, appears from many things that have already been observed, in the preceding parts of this discourse.

The reason of it appears from this, that gracious affections do arise from those operations and influences which are spiritual, and that the inward principle from whence they flow, is something divine, a communication of God, a participation of the divine nature, Christ living in the heart, the

Holy Spirit dwelling there, in union with the faculties of the soul, as an internal vital principle, exerting his own proper nature, in the exercise of those faculties. This is sufficient to shew us why true grace should have such activity, power, and efficacy. No wonder that which is divine, is powerful and effectual; for it has omnipotence on its side. If God dwells in the heart, and be vitally united to it, he will shew that he is a God, by the efficacy of his operation. Christ is not in the heart of a saint, as in a sepulchre, or as a dead saviour, that does nothing; but as in his temple, and as one that is alive from the dead. For in the heart where Christ savingly is, there he lives, and exerts himself after the power of that endless life that he received at his resurrection. Thus every saint that is a subject of the benefit of Christ's sufferings, is made to know and experience the power of his resurrection. The Spirit of Christ, which is the immediate spring of grace in the heart, is all life, all power, all act, 2 Cor. ii. 4. "In demonstration of the Spirit, and of power." 1 Thess. i. 5. "Our gospel came not unto you in word *only*, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost." 1 Cor. iv. 20. "The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power." Hence saving affections, though oftentimes they do not make so great a noise and show as others, yet have in them a secret solidity, life, and strength, whereby they take hold of, and carry away the heart, leading it into a kind of captivity, 2 Cor. x. 5, gaining a full and stedfast determination of the will for God and holiness, Psal. cx. 3. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." And thus it is that holy affections have a governing power in the course of a man's life. A statue may look very much like a real man, and a beautiful man; yea, it may have, in its appearance to the eye, the resemblance of a very lively, strong, and active man; but yet an inward principle of life and strength is wanting; and therefore it does nothing, it brings nothing to pass, there is no action or operation to answer the shew. False discoveries and affections do not go deep enough to reach and govern the spring of men's actions and practice. The seed in stony ground had not deepness of earth, and the root

did not go deep enough to bring forth fruit. But gracious affections go to the very bottom of the heart, and take hold of the very inmost springs of life and activity.

Herein chiefly appears the power of true godliness, viz. in its being effectual in practice. And the efficacy of godliness in this respect, is what the apostle has respect to, when he speaks of the power of godliness, 2 Tim. iii. 5, as is very plain; for he there is particularly declaring, how some professors of religion would notoriously fail in the practice of it, and then in the 5th verse observes, that in being thus of an unholy practice, they deny the power of godliness, though they have the form of it. Indeed the power of godliness is exerted in the first place within the soul, in the sensible, lively exercise of gracious affections there. Yet the principal evidence of this power of godliness, is in those exercises of holy affections that are practical, and in their being practical; in conquering the will, and conquering the lusts and corruptions of men, and carrying men on in the way of holiness, through all temptation, difficulty, and opposition.

Again, the reason why gracious affections have their exercise and effect in Christian practice, appears from this (which has also been before observed) that "the first objective ground of gracious affections, is the transcendently excellent and amiable nature of divine things, as they are in themselves, and not any conceived relation they bear to self, or self-interest." This shews why holy affections will cause men to be holy in their practice universally. What makes men partial in religion is, that they seek themselves, and not God, in their religion; and close with religion, not for its own excellent nature, but only to serve a turn. He that closes with religion only to serve a turn, will close with no more of it than he imagines serves that turn; but he that closes with religion for its own excellent and lovely nature, closes with all that has that nature: He that embraces religion for its own sake, embraces the whole of religion. This also shews why gracious affections will cause men to practise religion perseveringly, and at all times. Religion may alter greatly in process of time, as to its consistence with men's private interest, in ma-

ny respects; and therefore he that complies with it *only for* selfish views, is liable, in change of times, to forsake it; *but* the excellent nature of religion, as it is in itself, is invariable; it is always the same, at all times, and through all changes; it never alters in any respect.

The reason why gracious affections issue in holy practice, also further appears from the kind of excellency of divine things, that it has been observed is the foundation of all holy affections, viz. "their moral excellency, or the beauty of their holiness." No wonder that a love to holiness, for holiness, sake, inclines persons to practise holiness, and to practise every thing that is holy. Seeing holiness is the main thing that excites, draws, and governs all gracious affections, no wonder that all such affections tend to holiness. That which men love, they desire to have and to be united to, and possessed of. That beauty which men delight in, they desire to be adorned with. Those acts which men delight in, they necessarily incline to do.

And what has been observed of that divine teaching and leading of the Spirit of God, which there is in gracious affections, shews the reason of this tendency of such affections to an universally holy practice. For, as has been observed, the Spirit of God in this his divine teaching and leading, gives the soul a natural relish of the sweetness of that which is holy, and of every thing that is holy, so far as it comes in view and excites a disrelish and disgust of every thing that is unholy.

The same also appears from what has been observed of the nature of that spiritual knowledge, which is the foundation of all holy affection, as consisting in a sense and view of that excellency in divine things, which is supreme and transcendent. For hereby these things appear above all others, worthy to be chosen and adhered to. By the sight of the transcendent glory of Christ, true Christians see him worthy to be followed; and so are powerfully drawn after him; they see him worthy that they should forsake all for him: By the sight of that superlative amiableness, they are thoroughly disposed to be subject to him, and engaged to labor with earnestness and activity in his service, and made willing to go through all dif-

ficulties for his sake. And it is the discovery of this divine excellency of Christ, that makes them constant to him: For it makes a deep impression upon their minds, that they cannot forget him; and they will follow him whithersoever he goes, and it is in vain for any to endeavor to draw them away from him.

The reason of this practical tendency and issue of gracious affections, further appears from what has been observed of such affections being "attended with a thorough conviction of the judgment of the reality and certainty of divine things." No wonder that they who were never thoroughly convinced that there is any reality in the things of religion, will never be at the labor and trouble of such an earnest, universal, and persevering practice of religion, through all difficulties, self-denials, and sufferings, in a dependence on that, which they are not convinced of. But on the other hand, they who are thoroughly convinced of the certain truth of those things, must needs be governed by them in their practice; for the things revealed in the word of God are so great, and so infinitely more important than all other things, that it is inconsistent with the human nature, that a man should fully believe the truth of them, and not be influenced by them above all things in his practice.

Again, the reason of this expression and effect of holy affections in the practice, appears from what has been observed of "a change of nature, accompanying such affections." Without a change of nature, men's practice will not be thoroughly changed. Until the tree be made good, the fruit will not be good. Men do not gather grapes of thorns, nor figs of thistles. The swine may be washed, and appear clean for a little while, but yet, without a change of nature he will still wallow in the mire. Nature is a more powerful principle of action, than any thing that opposes it: Though it may be violently restrained for a while, it will finally overcome that which restrains it: It is like the stream of a river, it may be stopped a while with a dam, but if nothing be done to dry the fountain, it will not be stopped always; it will have a course, either in its old channel, or a new one. Nature is a thing

more constant and permanent, than any of those things that are the foundation of carnal men's reformation and righteousness. When a natural man denies his lust, and lives a strict, religious life, and seems humble, painful, and earnest in religion, it is not natural; it is all a force against nature; as when a stone is violently thrown upwards; but that force will be gradually spent; yet nature will remain in its full strength, and so prevails again, and the stone returns downwards. As long as corrupt nature is not mortified, but the principle left whole in a man, it is a vain thing to expect that it should not govern. But if the old nature be indeed mortified, and a new and heavenly nature infused, then may it well be expected, that men will walk in newness of life, and continue to do so to the end of their days.

The reason of this practical exercise and effect of holy affections, may also be partly seen, from what has been said of that spirit of humility which attends them. Humility is that wherein a spirit of obedience does much consist. A proud spirit is a rebellious spirit, but a humble spirit is a yieldable, subject, obediential spirit. We see among men, that the servant who is of a haughty spirit, is not apt in every thing to be submissive and obedient to the will of his master; but it is otherwise with that servant who is of a lowly spirit.

And that lamblike, dovelike spirit, that has been spoken of, which accompanies all gracious affections, fulfils (as the apostle observes, Rom. xiii. 8, 9, 10, and Gal. v. 14.) all the duties of the second table of the law; wherein Christian practice does very much consist, and wherein the external practice of Christianity chiefly consists.

And the reason why gracious affections are attended with that strict, universal and constant obedience which has been spoken of, further appears, from what has been observed of that tenderness of spirit, which accompanies the affections of true saints, causing in them so quick and lively a sense of pain through the presence of moral evil, and such a dread of the appearance of evil.

And one great reason why the Christian practice which flows from gracious affections, is universal, and constant, and

persevering, appears from what has been observed of those affections themselves, from whence this practice flows, being universal and constant, in all kinds of holy exercises, and towards all objects, and in all circumstances, and at all seasons in a beautiful symmetry and proportion.

And much of the reason why holy affections are expressed and manifested in such an earnestness, activity, and engagedness and perseverance in holy practice, as has been spoken of, appears from what has been observed, of the spiritual appetite and longing after further attainments in religion, which evermore attends true affection, and does not decay, but increases as those affections increase.

Thus we see how the tendency of holy affections to such a Christian practice as has been explained, appears from each of those characteristics of holy affection that have been before spoken of.

And this point may be further illustrated and confirmed, if it be considered, that the holy scriptures do abundantly place sincerity and soundness in religion, in making a full choice of God as our only Lord and portion, forsaking all for him, and in a full determination of the will for God and Christ, on counting the cost; in our heart's closing and complying with the religion of Jesus Christ, with all that belongs to it, embracing it with all its difficulties, as it were hating our dearest earthly enjoyments, and even our own lives, for Christ; giving up ourselves, with all that we have, wholly and for ever, unto Christ, without keeping back any thing, or making any reserve; or, in one word, in the great duty of selfdenial for Christ; or in denying, i. e. as it were, disowning and renouncing ourselves for him, making ourselves nothing that he may be all. See the texts to this purpose referred to in the margin.* Now surely having an heart to

* Matth. v. 29, 30. Chap. vi. 24. Chap. viii. 19.—22. Chap. iv. 18, to 22. Chap. x. 37, 38, 39. Chap. xiii. 44, 45, 46. Chap. xvi. 24, 25, 26. Chap. xviii. 8, 9. Chap. xix. 21, 27, 28, 29. Luke v. 27, 28. Chap. x. 42. Chap. xii. 33, 34. Chap. xiv. 16.—20, 25.—33. Chap. xvi. 13. Acts iv. 34, 35, with Chap. v. 1.—11. Rom. vi. 3.—8. Gal. ii. 20. Chap. v. 24. Philip. iii. 7.

forsake all for Christ, tends to actually forsaking all for him, so far as there is occasion, and we have the trial. An having an heart to deny ourselves for Christ, tends to a denying ourselves indeed, when Christ and selfinterest stand in competition. A giving up of ourselves, with all that we have, in our hearts, without making any reserve there, tends to our behaving ourselves universally as his, as subject to his will, and devoted to his ends. Our heart's entirely closing with the religion of Jesus, with all that belongs to it, and as attended with all its difficulties, upon a deliberate counting the cost, tends to an universal closing with the same in act and deed, and actually going through all the difficulties that we meet with in the way of religion, and so holding out with patience and perseverance.

The tendency of grace in the heart to holy practice, is very direct, and the connexion most natural, close, and necessary. True grace is not an unactive thing; there is nothing in heaven or earth of a more active nature; for it is life itself, and the most active kind of life, even spiritual and divine life. It is no barren thing; there is nothing in the universe that in its nature has a greater tendency to fruit. Godliness in the heart has as direct a relation to practice, as a fountain has to a stream, or as the luminous nature of the sun has to beams sent forth, or as life has to breathing, or the beating of the pulse, or any other vital act; or as a habit or principle of action has to action; for it is the very nature and notion of grace, that it is a principle of holy action or practice. Regeneration, which is that work of God in which grace is infused, has a direct relation to practice; for it is the very end of it, with a view to which the whole work is wrought; all is calculated and framed, in this mighty and manifold change wrought in the soul, so as directly to tend to this end. Eph. ii. 10. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." Yea it is the very end of the redemption of Christ, Tit. ii. 14. "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Eph. i. "According as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the

world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love." Chap. ii. 10. "Created unto good works, which God hath foreordained that we should walk in them." Holy practice is as much the end of all that God does about his saints, as fruit is the end of all the husbandman does about the growth of his field or vineyard; as the matter is often represented in scripture, Mat. iii. 10, chapter xiii. 8, 23, 30, 38, chapter xxi. 19, 33, 34. Luke xiii. 6. John xv. 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8. 1 Cor. iii. 9. Heb. vi. 7, 8. Isa. v. 1.....8. Cant. viii. 11, 12. Isa. xxvii. 2, 3.* And therefore every thing in a true Christian is calculated to reach this end. This fruit of holy practice is what every grace, and every discovery, and every individual thing which belongs to Christian experience, has a direct tendency to.

The constant and indissoluble connexion that there is between a Christian principle and profession in the true saints, and the fruit of holy practice in their lives, was typified of old in the frame of the golden candlestick in the temple. It is beyond doubt that that golden candlestick, with its seven branches and seven lamps, was a type of the church of Christ. The Holy Ghost himself has been pleased to put that matter out of doubt, by representing his church by such a golden candlestick, with seven lamps, in the fourth chapter of Zechariah, and representing the seven churches of Asia by seven golden candlesticks, in the first chapter of the Revelation. That golden candlestick in the temple was every where, thoughout its whole frame, made with knops and flowers, Exod. xxv. 31, to the end, and chapter xxxvii. 17.....24. The

* "To profess to know much is easy; but to bring your affections into subjection, to wrestle with lusts, to cross your wills and yourselves, upon every occasion, this is hard. The Lord looketh that in our lives we should be serviceable to him, and useful to men. That which is within, the Lord and our brethren are never the better for it: But the outward obedience, flowing thence, glorifieth God, and does good to men. The Lord will have this done. What else is the end of our planting and watering, but that the trees may be filled with sap? And what is the end of that sap, but that the trees may bring forth fruit? What careth the husbandman for leaves and barren trees?" *Dr. Preston of the Churches Carriage.*

word translated knop, in the original, signifies apple or pomegranate. There was a knop and a flower, a knop and a flower: Wherever there was a flower, there was an apple or pomegranate with it: The flower and the fruit were constantly connected, without fail. The flower contained the principle of the fruit, and a beautiful promising appearance of it; and it never was a deceitful appearance; the principle or shew of fruit, had evermore real fruit attending it, or succeeding it. So it is in the church of Christ: There is the principle of fruit in grace in the heart; and there is an amiable profession, signified by the open flowers of the candlestick; and there is answerable fruit, in holy practice, constantly attending this principle and profession. Every branch of the golden candlestick, thus composed of golden apples and flowers, was crowned with a burning, shining lamp on the top of it. For it is by this means that the saints shine as lights in the world, by making a fair and good profession of religion, and having their profession evermore joined with answerable fruit in practice: Agreeable to that of our Saviour, Matth. v. 15, 16, "Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." A fair and beautiful profession, and golden fruits accompanying one another, are the amiable ornaments of the true church of Christ. Therefore we find that apples and flowers were not only the ornaments of the candlestick in the temple, but of the temple itself, which is a type of the church; which the apostle tells us "is the temple of the living God." See 1 Kings vi. 18. "And the cedar of the house within was carved with knops, and open flowers." The ornaments and crown of the pillars, at the entrance of the temple, were of the same sort: They were lilies and pomegranates, or flowers and fruits mixed together, 1 Kings vii. 18, 19. So it is with all those that are "as pillars in the temple of God, who shall go no more out," or never be ejected as intruders; as it is with all true saints, Rev. iii. 12. "Him that over-

cometh, will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out."

Much the same thing seems to be signified by the ornaments on the skirt of the ephod, the garment of Aaron, the high priest; which were golden bells and pomegranates.—That these skirts of Aaron's garment represent the church, or the saints (that are as it were the garment of Christ) is manifest; for they are evidently so spoken of, Psal. cxxxiii. 1, 2. "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garments." That ephod of Aaron signified the same with the seamless coat of Christ our great High Priest. As Christ's coat had no seam, but was woven from the top throughout, so it was with the ephod, Exod. xxix. 22. As God took care in his providence, that Christ's coat should not be rent; so God took special care that the ephod should not be rent; Exod. xxviii. 32, and chap. xxxix. 23. The golden bells on this ephod, by their precious matter and pleasant sound, do well represent the good profession that the saints make; and the pomegranates, the fruit they bring forth. And as in the hem of the ephod, bells and pomegranates were constantly connected, as is once and again observed, there was a golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, Exod. xxviii. 34, and chap. xxxix. 26, so it is in the true saints; their good profession and their good fruit, do constantly accompany one another: The fruit they bring forth in life, evermore answers the pleasant sound of their profession.

Again, the very same thing is represented by Christ, in his description of his spouse, Cant. vii. 2. "Thy belly is like an heap of wheat, set about with lilies." Here again are beautiful flowers, and good fruit, accompanying one another. The lilies were fair and beautiful flowers, and the wheat was good fruit.

As this fruit of Christian practice is evermore found in true saints, according as they have opportunity and trial, so

it is found in them only; none but true Christians *do live* such an obedient life, so universally devoted to their duty, and given up to the business of a Christian, as has been explained. All unsanctified men are workers of iniquity: They are of their father the devil, and the lusts of their father they will do. There is no hypocrite that will go through with the business of religion, and both begin and finish the tour: They will not endure the trials God is wont to bring on the professors of religion, but will turn aside to their crooked ways: They will not be thoroughly faithful to Christ in their practice, and follow him whithersoever he goes. Whatever lengths they may go in religion in some instances, and though they may appear exceeding strict, and mightily engaged in the service of God for a season; yet they are servants to sin; the chains of their old taskmasters are not broken: Their lusts have yet a reigning power in their hearts; and therefore to these masters they will bow down again.* Daniel xii. 10. "Many shall be purified and made white, and tried: But the wicked *will* do wickedly, and none of the wicked shall understand, Isa. xxvi. 10. Let favor be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness; in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, Isa. xxxv. 8. And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it, Hos. xiv. 9. The ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them: But the transgressors shall fall therein. Job xxvii. 8, 9, 10. What is the hope of the hypocrite? Will he delight himself in the Almighty? Will he always call upon God?" An unsanctified man may hide his sin, and may in many things, and for a season refrain from sin; but he will not be brought finally to renounce his sin, and give it a bill of divorce; sin

* "No unregenerate man, though he go never so far, let him do never so much, but he lives in some one sin or other, secret or open, little or great. Judas went far, but he was covetous; Herod went far, but he loved his Herodias. Every dog hath his kennel; every swine hath his swill; and every wicked man his luft." *Shepard's Sincere Convert*, 1ft edition, p. 96.

is too dear to him, for him to be willing for that: "Wickedness is sweet in his mouth; and therefore he hides it under his tongue; he spares it, and forsakes it not; but keeps it still within his mouth," Job xx. 12, 13. Herein chiefly consists the straitness of the gate, and the narrowness of the way that leads to life; upon the account of which, carnal men will not go in thereat, viz. that it is a way of utterly denying and finally renouncing all ungodliness, and so a way of selfdenial or selfrenunciation.

Many natural men, under the means that are used with them, and God's strivings with them to bring them to forsake their sins, do by their sins as Pharaoh did by his pride and covetousness, which he gratified by keeping the children of Israel in bondage, when God strove with him, to bring him to let the people go. When God's hand pressed Pharaoh sore, and he was exercised with fears of God's future wrath, he entertained some thoughts of letting the people go, and promised he would do it; but from time to time he broke his promises, when he saw there was respite. When God filled Egypt with thunder and lightning, and the fire ran along the ground, then Pharaoh is brought to confess his sin with seeming humility, and to have a great resolution to let the people go, Exod. ix. 27, 28. "And Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned this time: The Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked: Intreat the Lord (for it is enough) that there be no more mighty thunderings and hail; and I will let you go, and ye shall stay no longer." So sinners are sometimes by thunders and lightnings, and great terrors of the law, brought to a seeming work of humiliation, and to appearance to part with their sins; but are no more thoroughly brought to a disposition to dismiss them, than Pharaoh was to let the people go. Pharaoh in the struggle that was between his conscience and his lusts, was for contriving that God might be served, and he enjoy his lusts that were gratified by the slavery of the people. Moses insisted that Israel's God should be served and sacrificed to: Pharaoh was willing to consent to that; but would have it done without his parting with the people;

"Go sacrifice to your God in the land," says he, Exod. viii. 25. So, many sinners are for contriving to serve God, and enjoy their lusts too. Moses objected against complying with Pharaoh's proposal, that serving God, and yet continuing in Egypt under their taskmasters, did not agree together, and were inconsistent one with another; (there is no serving God, and continuing slaves to such enemies of God at the same time.) After this Pharaoh consented to let the people go, provided they would not go far away: He was not willing to part with them finally, and therefore would have them within reach. So do many hypocrites with respect to their sins..... Afterwards Pharaoh consented to let the men go, if they would leave the women and children, Exod. x. 8, 9, 10. And then after that, when God's hand was yet harder upon him, he consented that they should go, even women and children, as well as men, provided they would leave their cattle behind? But he was not willing to let them go, and all that they had, Exod. x. 24. So it oftentimes is with sinners; they are willing to part with some of their sins, but not all; they are brought to part with the more gross acts of sin, but not to part with their lusts, in lesser indulgencies of them. Whereas we must part with all our sins, little and great; and all that belongs to them, men, women, children, and cattle; they must be let go, with "their young, and with their old, with their sons, and with their daughters, with their flocks, and with their herds, there must not be an hoof left behind;" as Moses told Pharaoh, with respect to the children of Israel. At last, when it came to extremity, Pharaoh consented to let the people all go, and all that they had; but he was not stedfastly of that mind, he soon repented and pursued after them again, and the reason was, that those lusts of pride and covetousness, that were gratified by Pharaoh's dominion over the people, and the gains of their service, were never really mortified in him, but only violently restrained. And thus, being guilty of backsliding, after his seeming compliance with God's commands, he was destroyed without remedy. Thus there may be a forced parting with ways of disobedience to the commands of God, that may seem to be

universal, as to what appears for a little season; but because it is a mere force, without the mortification of the inward principle of sin, they will not persevere in it; but will return as the dog to his vomit; and so bring on themselves dreadful and remediless destruction. There were many false disciples in Christ's time, that followed him for a while; but none of them followed him to the end; but some on one occasion, and some on another, went back and walked no more with him.*

From what has been said, it is manifest, that Christian practice, or a holy life, is a great and distinguishing sign of true and saving grace. But I may go farther, and assert, that it is the chief of all the signs of grace, both as an evidence of the sincerity of professors unto others, and also to their own consciences.

But then it is necessary that this be rightly taken, and that it be well understood and observed, in what sense and manner Christian practice is the greatest sign of grace. Therefore to set this matter in a clear light, I will endeavor particularly and distinctly to prove, that Christian practice is the principal sign by which Christians are to judge, both of their own and others, sincerity of godliness; withal observing some things that are needful to be particularly noted, in order to a right understanding of this matter.

1. I shall consider Christian practice and an holy life, as

* "The counterfeit and common grace of foolish virgins, after some time of glorious profession, will certainly go out and be quite spent. It consumes in the using, and shining, and burning.—Men that have been most forward, decay: Their gifts decay, life decays. It is so, after some time of profession; For at first, it rather grows than decays and withers; but afterwards they have enough of it, it withers and dies. The Spirit of God comes upon many hypocrites, in abundant and plentiful measure of awakening grace: It comes upon them, as it did upon Balaam, and as it is in overflowing waters, which spread far, and grow very deep, and fill many empty places. Though it doth come upon them so yet it doth never rest within, so as to dwell there, to take up an eternal mansion for himself.——Hence it doth decay by little and little, until at last it is quite gone. As ponds filled with rain water, which comes upon them; not spring water, that riseth up within them; it dries up by little and little, until quite dry." *Shepard's Parable*, Part II, p. 58, 59.

a manifestation and sign of the sincerity of a professing Christian, to the eye of his neighbors and brethren.

And that this is the chief sign of grace in this respect, is very evident from the word of God. Christ, who knew best how to give us rules to judge of others, has repeated it and inculcated it, that we should know them by their fruits, Matth. vii. 16. "Ye shall know them by their fruits." And then, after arguing the point, and giving clear reasons why it must needs be, that men's fruits must be the chief evidence of what sort they are, in the following verses, he closes by repeating the assertion, verse 20. "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." Again, chap. xii. 33. "Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt." As much as to say, it is a very absurd thing, for any to suppose that the tree is good and yet the fruit bad, that the tree is of one sort, and the fruit of another; for the proper evidence of the nature of the tree is its fruit. Nothing else can be intended by that last clause in the verse, "For the tree is known by its fruit," than that the tree is chiefly known by its fruit, that this is the main and most proper diagnostic by which one tree is distinguished from another. So Luke vi. 44. "Every tree is known by his own fruit." Christ no where says, Ye shall know the tree by its leaves or flowers, or ye shall know men by their talk, or ye shall know them by the good story they tell of their experiences, or ye shall know them by the manner and air of their speaking, and emphasis and pathos of expression, or by their speaking feelingly, or by making a very great show by abundance of talk, or by many tears and affectionate expressions, or by the affections ye feel in your hearts towards them; but by their fruits shall ye know them; the tree is known by its fruit; every tree is known by its own fruit. And as this is the evidence that Christ has directed us mainly to look at in others, in judging of them, so it is the evidence that Christ has mainly directed us to give to others, whereby they may judge of us, Matth. v. 16. "Let your light so shine before men, that others seeing your good works, may glorify your Father which is in

heaven." Here Christ directs us to manifest our godliness to others. Godliness is as it were a light that shines in the soul. Christ directs that this light not only shine within, but that it should shine out before men, that they may see it. But which way shall this be? It is by our good works. Christ doth not say, that others hearing your good works, your good story, or your pathetical expressions; but "that others, seeing your good works, may glorify your Father which is in heaven." Doubtless, when Christ gives us a rule how to make our light shine, that others may have evidence of it, his rule is the best that is to be found. And the apostles do mention Christian practice as the principal ground of their esteem of persons as true Christians. As the Apostle Paul, in the 6th chapter of Hebrews. There the apostle, in the beginning of the chapter, speaks of them that have great common illuminations, that have "been enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, that afterwards fall away, and are like barren ground, that is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned;" and then immediately adds in the 9th verse (expressing his charity for the Christian Hebrews, as having that saving grace, which is better than all these common illuminations) "but beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak." And then, in the next verse, he tells them what was the reason he had such good thoughts of them: He does not say, that it was because they had given him a good account of a work of God upon their souls, and talked very experimentally; but it was their work and labor of love; "for God is not unrighteous, to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have shewed towards his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister." And the same apostle speaks of a faithful serving of God in practice, as the proper proof to others of men's loving Christ above all, and preferring his honor to their private interest, Phil. ii. 21, 22. "For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's; but ye know

the proof of him, that as a son with the Father, he hath served with me in the gospel." So the Apostle John expresses the same, as the ground of his good opinion of Gaius, 3 John 3—6. "For I rejoiced greatly when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee." But how did the brethren testify of the truth that was in Gaius? And how did the apostle judge of the truth that was in him? It was not because they testified that he had given them a good account of the steps of his experiences, and talked like one that felt what he said, and had the very language of a Christian: But they testified, "that he walked in the truth; as it follows, even as thou walkest in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in the truth. Beloved, thou dost faithfully whatsoever thou dost to the brethren and to strangers; which have borne witness of thy charity before the church." Thus the apostle explains what the brethren had borne witness of, when they came and testified of his walking in the truth. And the apostle seems in this same place, to give it as a rule to Gaius how he should judge of others; in verse 10, he mentions one Diotrephes, that did not carry himself well, and led away others after him; and then in the 11th verse, he directs Gaius to beware of such, and not to follow them; and gives him a rule whereby he may know them, exactly agreeable to that rule Christ had given before, "by their fruits ye shall know them;" says the apostle, "beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doth good, is of God; but he that doth evil, hath not seen God." And I would further observe, that the Apostle James, expressly comparing that way of shewing others our faith and Christianity by our practice or works, with other ways of shewing our faith without works, or not by works, does plainly and abundantly prefer the former, James ii. 18. "Yea, a man may say, thou hast faith, and I have works; shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works." A manifestation of our faith without works, or in a way diverse from works, is a manifestation of it in words, whereby a man professes faith. As the apostle says, verse 14, "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath

faith ?" Therefore here are two ways of manifesting to our neighbor what is in our hearts; one by what we say, and the other by what we do. But the apostle abundantly prefers the latter as the best evidence. Now certainly all accounts we give of ourselves in words, our saying that we have faith, and that we are converted, and telling the manner how we came to have faith, and the steps by which it was wrought, and the discoveries and experiences that accompany it, are still but manifesting our faith by what we say; it is but shewing our faith by our words; which the apostle speaks of as falling vastly short of manifesting of it by what we do, and shewing our faith by our works.

And as the scripture plainly teaches, that practice is the best evidence of the sincerity of professing Christians; so reason teaches the same thing. Reason shews, that men's deeds are better and more faithful interpreters of their minds, than their words. The common sense of all mankind, through all ages and nations, teaches them to judge of men's hearts chiefly by their practice, in other matters; As, whether a man be a loyal subject, a true lover, a dutiful child, or a faithful servant. If a man profess a great deal of love and friendship to another, reason teaches all men, that such a profession is not so great an evidence of his being a real and hearty friend, as his appearing a friend in deeds; being faithful and constant to his friend in prosperity and adversity, ready to lay out himself, and deny himself, and suffer in his personal interest, to do him a kindness. A wise man will trust to such evidences of the sincerity of friendship, further than a thousand earnest professions and solemn declarations, and most affectionate expressions of friendship in words. And there is equal reason, why practice should also be looked upon as the best evidence of friendship towards Christ. Reason says the same that Christ said, in John xiv. 21. "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." Thus if we see a man, who in the course of his life seems to follow and imitate Christ, and greatly to exert and deny himself for the honor of Christ, and to promote his kingdom and interest in the world; reason teaches, that this is an evidence

of love to Christ, more to be depended on, than if a man only says he has love to Christ, and tells of the inward experiences he has had of love to him, what strong love he felt, and how his heart was drawn out in love at such and such a time, when it may be there appears but little imitation of Christ in his behavior, and he seems backward to do any great matter for him, or to put himself out of his way for the promoting of his kingdom, but seems to be apt to excuse himself, whenever he is called to deny himself for Christ. So if a man, in declaring his experiences, tells how he found his heart weaned from the world, and saw the vanity of it, so that all looked as nothing to him, at such and such times, and professes that he gives up all to God, and calls heaven and earth to witness to it; but yet in his practice is violent in pursuing the world, and what he gets he keeps close, is exceeding loth to part with much of it to charitable and pious uses, it comes from him almost like his heart's blood. But there is another professing Christian, that says not a great deal, yet in his behavior appears ready at all times to forsake the world, whenever it stands in the way of his duty, and is free to part with it at any time, to promote religion and the good of his fellow creatures. Reason teaches, that the latter gives far the most credible manifestation of an heart weaned from the world. And if a man appears to walk humbly before God and men, and to be of a conversation that savors of a broken heart, appearing patient and resigned to God under affliction, and meek in his behavior amongst men; this is a better evidence of humiliation, than if a person only tells how great a sense he had of his own unworthiness, how he was brought to lie in the dust, and was quite emptied of himself, and see himself nothing and all over filthy and abominable, &c. &c. but yet acts as if he looked upon himself one of the first and best of saints, and by just right the head of all the Christians in the town, and is assuming, selfwilled, and impatient of the least contradiction or opposition; we may be assured in such a case, that a man's practice comes from a lower place in his heart than his profession. So (to mention no more instances) if a professor of Christianity manifests in his behavior a pitiful tender spirit

towards others in calamity, ready to bear their burdens with them, willing to spend his substance for them, and to suffer many inconveniences in his worldly interest to promote the good of others' souls and bodies; is not this a more credible manifestation of a spirit of love to men, than only a man's telling what love he felt to others at certain times, how he pitied their souls, how his soul was in travail for them, and how he felt a hearty love and pity to his enemies; when in his behavior he seems to be of a very selfish spirit, close and niggardly, all for himself, and none for his neighbors, and perhaps envious and contentious? Persons in a pang of affection may think they have a willingness of heart for great things, to do much and to suffer much, and so may profess it very earnestly and confidently, when really their hearts are far from it. Thus many in their affectionate pangs, have thought themselves willing to be damned eternally for the glory of God. Passing affections easily produce words; and words are cheap; and godliness is more easily feigned in words than in actions. Christian practice is a costly, laborious thing. The selfdenial that is required of Christians, and the narrowness of the way that leads to life, does not consist in words, but in practice. Hypocrites may much more easily be brought to talk like saints, than to act like saints.

Thus it is plain, that Christian practice is the best sign or manifestation of the true godliness of a professing Christian, to the eye of his neighbors.

But then the following thing should be well observed, that this matter may be rightly understood.

First, it must be observed, that when the scripture speaks of Christian practice, as the best evidence to others, of sincerity and truth of grace, a profession of Christianity is not excluded, but supposed. The rules mentioned, were rules given to the followers of Christ, to guide them in their thoughts of professing Christians, and those that offered themselves as some of their society, whereby they might judge of the truth of their pretences, and the sincerity of the profession they made; and not for the trial of Heathens, or those that made no pretence to Christianity, and that Christians had nothing

to do with. This is as plain as is possible in that great rule which Christ gives in the 7th of Matthew. "By their fruits ye shall know them." He there gives a rule how to judge of those that professed to be Christians, yea that made a very high profession, false prophets, "who come in sheep's clothing, as ver. 15." So it is also with that of the Apostle James, chapter ii. 18. "Shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works." It is evident, that both these sorts of persons, offering to give these diverse evidences of their faith, are professors of faith: This is implied in their offering each of them to give evidences of the faith they professed. And it is evident by the preceding verses, that the apostle is speaking of professors of faith in Jesus Christ. So it is very plain, that the Apostle John, in those passages that have been observed in his third epistle, is speaking of professing Christians. Though in these rules, the Christian practice of professors be spoken of as the greatest and most distinguishing sign of their sincerity in their profession, much more evidential than their profession itself; yet a profession of Christianity is plainly presupposed: It is not the main thing in the evidence, nor any thing distinguishing in it; yet it is a thing requisite and necessary in it. As the having an animal body, is not any thing distinguishing of a man, from other creatures, and is not the main thing in the evidence of human nature, yet it is a thing requisite and necessary in the evidence. So that if any man should say plainly that he was not a Christian, and did not believe that Jesus was the Son of God, or a person sent of God; these rules of Christ and his apostles do not at all oblige us to look upon him as a sincere Christian, let his visible practice and virtues be what they will. And not only do these rules take no place with respect to a man that explicitly denies Christianity, and is a professed Deist, Jew, Heathen, or open Infidel; but also with respect to a man that only forbears to make a profession of Christianity; because these rules were given us to judge of professing Christians only: Fruits must be joined with open flowers; bells and pomegranates go together.

But here will naturally arise this inquiry, viz. when may a man be said to profess Christianity, or what profession may properly be called a profession of Christianity?

I answer in two things.

1. In order to a man's being properly said to make a profession of Christianity, there must undoubtedly be a profession of all that is necessary to his being a Christian, or of so much as belongs to the essence of Christianity. Whatsoever is essential in Christianity itself, the profession of that is essential in the profession of Christianity. The profession must be of the thing professed. For a man to profess Christianity, is for him to declare that he has it. And therefore so much as belongs to a thing, so as to be necessary in order to its being truly denominated that thing; so much is essential to the declaration of that thing, in order to its being truly denominated a declaration of that thing. If we take only a part of Christianity, and leave out a part that is essential to it, what we take is not Christianity; because something that is of the essence of it is wanting. So if we profess only a part, and leave out a part that is essential, that which we profess is not Christianity. Thus, in order to a profession of Christianity, we must profess that we believe that Jesus is the Messiah; for this reason, because such a belief is essential to Christianity. And so we must profess, either expressly or implicitly, that Jesus satisfied for our sins, and other essential doctrines of the gospel, because a belief of these things also is essential to Christianity. But there are other things as essential to religion, as an orthodox belief; which it is therefore as necessary that we should profess, in order to our being truly said to profess Christianity. Thus it is essential to Christianity that we repent of our sins, that we be convinced of our own sinfulness, and that we are sensible we have justly exposed ourselves to God's wrath, and that our hearts do renounce all sin, and that we do with our whole hearts embrace Christ as our only Saviour; and that we love him above all, and are willing for his sake to forsake all, and that we do give up ourselves to be entirely and for ever his, &c. Such things as these do as much belong to the essence of Christianity, as the

belief of any of the doctrines of the gospel: And therefore the profession of them does as much belong to a Christian profession. Not that in order to a being professing Christians, it is necessary that there should be an explicit profession of every individual thing that belongs to Christian grace or virtue: But certainly, there must be a profession, either express or implicit, of what is of the essence of religion. And as to those things that Christians should express in their profession, we ought to be guided by the precepts of God's word, or by scripture examples of public professions of religion, God's people have made from time to time. Thus they ought to profess their repentance of sin: As of old, when persons were initiated as professors, they came confessing their sins, manifesting their humiliation for sin, Matth. iii. 6. And the baptism they were baptized with, was called the baptism of repentance, Mark i. 3. And John, when he had baptized them, exhorted them to bring forth fruits meet for repentance, Matth. iii. 8. i. e. agreeable to that repentance which they had professed; encouraging them, that if they did so, they should escape the wrath to come, and be gathered as wheat into God's garner, Matth. iii. 7, 8, 9, 10, 12. So the Apostle Peter says to the Jews, Acts ii. 38. "Repent, and be baptized:" Which shews, that repentance is a qualification that must be visible in order to baptism; and therefore ought to be publicly professed. So when the Jews that returned from captivity, entered publicly into covenant, it was with confession, or public confession of repentance of their sins, Neh. ix. 2. This profession of repentance should include or imply a profession of conviction, that God would be just in our damnation: See Neh. ix. 33, together with ver. 35, and the beginning of the next chapter. They should profess their faith in Jesus Christ, and that they embrace Christ, and rely upon him as their Saviour, with their whole hearts, and that they do joyfully entertain the gospel of Christ. Thus Philip, in order to baptizing the eunuch, required that he should profess that he believed with all his heart: And they that were received as visible Christians, at that great outpouring of the Spirit, which began at the day of Pentecost, appeared gladly to receive the gospel, Acts ii. 41. "Then they that gladly receiv-

ed the word, were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." They should profess that they rely on Christ's righteousness only, and strength; and that they are devoted to him, as their only Lord and Saviour, and that they rejoice in him as their only righteousness and portion. It is foretold, that all nations shall be brought publicly to make this profession, Isa. xlv. 22, to the end: "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. Surely, shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength; even to him shall men come, and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed. In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory." They should profess to give up themselves entirely to Christ, and to God through him; as the children of Israel, when they publicly recognized their covenant with God, Deut. xxvi. 17. "Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice." They ought to profess a willingness of heart to embrace religion with all its difficulties, and to walk in a way of obedience to God universally and perseveringly, Exod. xix. 8, and xxiv. 3, 7. Deut. xxvi. 16, 17, 18. 2 Kings xxiii. 3. Neh. x. 28, 29. Psal. cxix. 57, 106. They ought to profess, that all their hearts and souls are in these engagements to be the Lord's and for ever to serve him, 2 Chron. xv. 12, 13, 14. God's people swearing to God, and swearing by his name, or to his name, as it might be rendered (by which seems to be signified their solemnly giving up themselves to him in covenant, and vowing to receive him as their God, and to be entirely his, to obey and serve him) is spoken of as a duty to be performed by all God's visible Israel, Deut. vi. 13, and x. 20. Psal. lxiii. 11. Isa. xix. 18. Chap. xlv. 23, 24, compared with Rom. xiv. 11, and Phil. ii. 10, 11. Isa. xlviii. 1, 2, and lxv. 15, 16. Jer. iv. 2, and v. 7, and xii. 16. Hos. iv. 15, and x. 4. Therefore, in order to persons

being entitled to full esteem and charity, with their neighbors, as being sincere professors of Christianity; by those forementioned rules of Christ and his apostles, there must be a visibly holy life, with a profession, either expressing, or plainly implying such things as those which have been now mentioned. We are to know them by their fruits, that is, we are by their fruits to know whether they be what they profess to be; not that we are to know by their fruits, that they have something in them, they do not so much as pretend to.

And moreover,

2. That profession of these things, which is properly called a Christian profession, and which must be joined with Christian practice, in order to persons being entitled to the benefit of those rules, must be made (as to what appears) understandingly: That is, they must be persons that appear to have been so far instructed in the principles of religion, as to be in an ordinary capacity to understand the proper import of what is expressed in their profession. For sounds are no significations or declarations of any thing, any further than men understand the meaning of their own sounds.

But in order to persons making a proper profession of Christianity, such as the scripture directs to and such as the followers of Christ should require, in order to the acceptance of the professors with full charity, as of their society; it is not necessary they should give an account of the particular steps and method, by which the Holy Spirit, sensibly to them, wrought and brought about those great essential things of Christianity in their hearts. There is no footstep in the scripture of any such way of the apostles, or primitive ministers and Christians, requiring any such relation, in order to their receiving and treating others as their Christian brethren, to all intents and purposes, or of their first examining them, concerning the particular method and order of their experiences. They required of them a profession of the things wrought; but no account of the manner of working was required of them. Nor is there the least shadow in the scripture of any such custom in the church of God, from Adam to the death of the Apostle John.

I am far from saying, that it is not requisite that persons should give any sort of account of their experiences to their brethren. For persons to profess those things wherein the essence of Christianity lies, is the same thing as to profess that they experience those things. Thus for persons solemnly to profess, that, in a full conviction of their own utter sinfulness, misery, and impotence, and totally undone state as in themselves, and their just desert of God's utter rejection and eternal wrath, and the utter insufficiency of their own righteousness, or any thing in them, to satisfy divine justice, or recommend them to God's favor, they do entirely depend on the Lord Jesus Christ, and his satisfaction and righteousness; that they do with all their hearts believe the truth of the gospel of Christ; and that in a full conviction of his sufficiency and perfect excellency as a Saviour, as exhibited in the gospel, they do with their whole souls cleave to him, and acquiesce in him, as the refuge and rest of their souls, and fountain of their comfort; that they repent of their sins, and utterly renounce all sin, and give up themselves wholly to Christ, willingly subjecting themselves to him as their King; that they give him their hearts and their whole man; and are willing and resolved to have God for their whole and everlasting portion; and in a dependence on his promises of a future eternal enjoyment of him in heaven, to renounce all the enjoyments of this vain world, selling all for this great treasure and future inheritance, and to comply with every command of God, even the most difficult and self denying, and devote their whole lives to God's service; and that in forgiveness of those that have injured them, and a general benevolence to mankind, their hearts are united to the people of Jesus Christ as their people, to cleave to them and love them as their brethren, and worship and serve God, and follow Christ in union and fellowship with them, being willing and resolved to perform all those duties that belong to them, as members of the same family of God and mystical body of Christ: I say, for persons solemnly to profess such things as these, as in the presence of God, is the same thing as to profess that

they are conscious to, or do experience such things in their hearts.

Nor is it what I suppose, that persons giving an account of their experience of particular exercises of grace, with the times and circumstances, gives no advantage to others in forming a judgment of their state; or that persons may not fitly be inquired of concerning these in some cases, especially cases of great importance, where all possible satisfaction concerning persons' piety is especially to be desired and sought after, as in the case of ordination or approbation of a minister. It may give advantage in forming a judgment, in several respects; and among others, in this, that hereby we may be better satisfied, that the professor speaks honestly and understandingly, in what he professes; and that he does not make the profession in mere formality.

In order to a profession of Christianity being accepted to any purpose, there ought to be good reason, from the circumstances of the profession, to think, that the professor does not make such a profession out of a mere customary compliance with a prescribed form, using words without any distinct meaning, or in a very lax and ambiguous manner, as confessions of faith are often subscribed; but that the professor understandingly and honestly signifies what he is conscious of in his own heart; otherwise his profession can be of no significance, and no more to be regarded than the sound of things without life. But indeed (whatever advantage an account of particular exercises may give in judging of this) it must be owned, that the professor having been previously thoroughly instructed by his teachers, and given good proof of his sufficient knowledge, together with a practice agreeable to his profession, is the best evidence of this.

Nor do I suppose, but that, if a person that is inquired of about particular passages, times, and circumstances of his Christian experience, among other things, seems to be able to give a distinct account of the manner of his first conversion, in such a method as has been frequently observable in true conversion, so that things seem sensibly and distinctly to follow one another, in the order of time, according to the

order of nature; it is an illustrating circumstance, that among other things adds lustre to the evidence he gives his brethren of the truth of his experiences.

But the thing that I speak of as unscriptural, is the insisting on a particular account of the distinct method and steps, wherein the Spirit of God did sensibly proceed, in first bringing the soul into a state of salvation, as a thing requisite in order to receiving a professor into full charity as a real Christian; or so, as for the want of such relation, to disregard other things in the evidence persons give to their neighbors of their Christianity, that are vastly more important and essential.

Secondly, That we may rightly understand how Christian practice is the greatest evidence that others can have of the sincerity of a professing Christian, it is needful that what was said before, shewing what Christian practice is, should be borne in mind; and that it should be considered how far this may be visible to others. Merely that a professor of Christianity is what is commonly called an honest man, and a moral man, (i. e. we have no special transgression or iniquity to charge him with, that might bring a blot on his character) is no great evidence of the sincerity of his profession. This is not making his light shine before men. This is not that work and labor of love shewed towards Christ's name, which gave the apostle such persuasion of the sincerity of the professing Hebrews, Heb. vi. 9, 10. It may be so, that we may see nothing in a man, but that he may be a good man, there may appear nothing in his life and conversation inconsistent with his being godly, and yet neither may there be any great positive evidence that he is so. But there may be great positive appearance of holiness in men's visible behavior. Their life may appear to be a life of the service of God: They may appear to follow the example of Jesus Christ, and come up in a great measure to those excellent rules in the 5th, 6th, and 7th chapters of Matthew, and 12th of Romans, and many other parts of the New Testament: There may be a great appearance of their being universal in their obedience to Christ's commands and the rules of the gospel. They

may appear to be universal in the performance of the duties of the first table, manifesting the fear and love of God; and also universal in fulfilling rules of love to men, love to saints, and love to enemies: Rules of meekness and forgiveness, rules of mercy and charity, and looking not only at our own things but also at the things of others; rules of doing good to men's souls and bodies, to particular persons and to the public; rules of temperance and mortification, and of an humble conversation; rules of bridling the tongue, and improving it to glorify God and bless men, shewing that in their tongues is the law of kindness. They may appear to walk as Christians, in all places, and at all seasons, in the house of God, and in their families, and among their neighbors, on Sabbath days and every day, in business and in conversation, towards friends and enemies, towards superiors, inferiors, and equals. Persons in their visible walk may appear to be very earnestly engaged in the service of God and mankind, much to labor and lay out themselves in this work of a Christian, and to be very constant and stedfast in it, under all circumstances and temptations. There may be great manifestations of a spirit to deny themselves, and suffer for God and Christ, and the interest of religion, and the benefit of their brethren. There may be great appearances in a man's walk, of a disposition to forsake any thing, rather than to forsake Christ, and to make every thing give place to his honor. There may be great manifestations in a man's behavior of such religion as this, being his element, and of his placing the delight and happiness of his life in it; and his conversation may be such, that he may carry with him a sweet odor of Christian graces and heavenly dispositions, wherever he goes. And when it is thus in the professors of Christianity, here is an evidence to others of their sincerity in their profession, to which all other manifestations are not worthy to be compared.

There is doubtless a great variety in the degrees of evidence that professors do exhibit of their sincerity, in their life and practice; as there is a variety in the fairness and clearness of accounts persons give of the manner and method of their experiences: But undoubtedly such a manifestation as

has been described, of a Christian spirit in practice, is vastly beyond the fairest and brightest story of particular steps and passages of experience that ever was told. And in general, a manifestation of the sincerity of a Christian profession in practice, is far better than a relation of experiences. But yet,

Thirdly, It must be noted, agreeable to what was formerly observed, that no external manifestations and outward appearances whatsoever, that are visible to the world, are infallible evidences of grace. These manifestations that have been mentioned, are the best that mankind can have; and they are such as do oblige Christians entirely to embrace professors as saints, and love them and rejoice in them as the children of God, and are sufficient to give them as great satisfaction concerning them, as ever is needful to guide them in their conduct, or for any purpose that needs to be answered in this world. But nothing that appears to them in their neighbor, can be sufficient to beget an absolute certainty concerning the state of his soul: For they see not his heart, nor can they see all his external behavior; for much of it is in secret, and hid from the eye of the world; and it is impossible certainly to determine how far a man may go in many external appearances and imitations of grace, from other principles. Though undoubtedly, if others could see so much of what belongs to men's practice, as their own consciences may see of it, it might be an infallible evidence of their state, as will appear from what follows.

Having thus considered Christian practice as the best evidence of the sincerity of professors to others, I now proceed,

2. To observe, that the scripture also speaks of Christian practice as a distinguishing and sure evidence of grace to persons' own consciences. This is very plain in 1 John ii. 3. "Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments." And the testimony of our consciences, with respect to our good deeds, is spoken of as that which may give us assurance of our own godliness, 1 John iii. 18, 19. "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed, and in truth. And hereby we know

that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him." And the Apostle Paul, in Heb. vi. speaks of the work and labor of love, of the Christian Hebrews, as that which both gave him a persuasion that they had something above the highest common illuminations, and also as that evidence which tended to give them the highest assurance of hope concerning themselves, verse 9, &c. "But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. For God is not unrighteous, to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to his saints, and do minister. And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope unto the end." So the apostle directs the Galatians to examine their behavior or practice, that they might have rejoicing in themselves in their own happy state, Gal. vi. 4. "Let every man prove his own work, so shall he have rejoicing in himself, and not in another." And the psalmist says, Psal. cxix. 6, "Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments;" i. e. then I shall be bold, and assured, and stedfast in my hope. And in that of our Saviour, Matth. vii. 19, 20. "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." Though Christ gives this, firstly, as a rule by which we should judge of others, yet in the words that next follow he plainly shews, that he intends it also as a rule by which we should judge ourselves; "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven." Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, &c.———And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: Depart from me, ye that work iniquity. Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doth them, I will liken him unto a wise man which built his house upon a rock.———And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man which built his house

upon the sand." I shall have occasion to mention other texts that shew the same thing, hereafter.

But for the greater clearness in this matter, I would, first, shew how Christian practice, doing good works, or keeping Christ's commandments, is to be taken, when the scripture represents it as a sure sign to our own consciences, that we are real Christians. And, secondly, will prove, that this is the chief of all evidences that men can have of their own sincere godliness.

First, I would shew how Christian practice, or keeping Christ's commandments, is to be taken, when the scripture represents it as a sure evidence to our own consciences, that we are sincere Christians.

And here I would observe, that we cannot reasonably suppose, that when the scripture in this case speaks of good works, good fruit, and keeping Christ's commandments, it has respect merely to what is external, or the motion and action of the body without including any thing else, having no respect to any aim or intention of the agent, or any act of his understanding or will. For consider men's actions so, and they are no more good works or acts of obedience, than the regular motions of a clock; nor are they considered as the actions of the man, nor any human actions at all. The actions of the body, taken thus, are neither acts of obedience nor disobedience, any more than the motions of the body in a convulsion. But the obedience and fruit that is spoken of, is the obedience and fruit of the man; and therefore not only the acts of the body, but the obedience of the soul, consisting in the acts and practice of the soul. Not that I suppose, that when the scripture speaks, in this case, of gracious works, and fruit and practice, that in these expressions are included all inward piety and holiness of heart, both principle and exercise, both spirit and practice: Because then, in these things being given as signs of a gracious principle in the heart, the same thing would be given as a sign of itself, and there would be no distinction between root and fruit. But only the gracious exercise, and holy act of the soul is meant, and given as the sign of the holy principle and good estate.

Neither is every kind of inward exercise of grace meant; but the practical exercise, that exercise of the soul, and exertion of inward holiness, which there is in an obediential act; or that exertion of the mind, and act of grace, which issues and terminates in what they call the imperate acts of the will; in which something is directed and commanded by the soul to be done, and brought to pass in practice.

Here, for a clearer understanding, I would observe, that there are two kinds of exercises of grace. 1. There are those that some call immanent acts; that is, those exercises of grace that remain within the soul, that begin and are terminated there, without any immediate relation to any thing to be done outwardly, or to be brought to pass in practice. Such are the exercises of grace, which the saints often have in contemplation; when the exercise that is in the heart, does not directly proceed to, or terminate in any thing beyond the thoughts of the mind; however they may tend to practice (as all exercises of grace do) more remotely. 2. There is another kind of acts of grace, that are more strictly called practical, or effective exercises, because they immediately respect something to be done. They are the exertions of grace in the commanding acts of the will, directing the outward actions. As when a saint gives a cup of cold water to a disciple, in and from the exercise of the grace of charity; or voluntarily endures persecution in the way of his duty; immediately from the exercise of a supreme love to Christ. Here is the exertion of grace producing its effect in outward actions. These exercises of grace are practical and productive of good works, not only in this sense, that they are of a productive nature, (for so are all exercises of true grace) but they are the producing acts. This is properly the exercise of grace in the act of the will; and this is properly the practice of the soul. And the soul is the immediate actor of no other practice but this; the motions of the body follow from the laws of union between the soul and body, which God, and not the soul, has fixed and does maintain. The act of the soul and the exercise of grace, that is exerted in the performance of a good work, is

the good work itself, so far as the soul is concerned in it, or so far as it is the soul's good work. The determinations of the will are indeed our very actions, so far as they are properly ours, as Dr. Doddridge observes.* In this practice of the soul is included the aim and intention of the soul, which is the agent. For not only should we not look on the motions of a statue, doing justice or distributing alms by clock-work, as any acts of obedience to Christ in that statue; but neither would any body call the voluntary actions of a man, externally and materially agreeable to a command of Christ, by the name of obedience to Christ, if he had never heard of Christ, or any of his commands, or had no thought of his commands in what he did. If the acts of obedience and good fruit spoken of, be looked upon, not as mere motions of the body, but as acts of the soul; the whole exercise of the spirit of the mind, in the action must be taken in, with the end acted for, and the respect the soul then has to God, &c. otherwise they are no acts of denial of ourselves, or obedience to God, or service done to him, but something else. Such effective exercises of grace as these that I have now described, many of the Martyrs have experienced in a high degree. And all true saints live a life of such acts of grace as these; as they all live a life of gracious works, of which these operative exertions of grace are the life and soul. And this is the obedience and fruit that God mainly looks at, as he looks at the soul, more than the body; as much as the soul, in the constitution of the human nature, is the superior part. As God looks at the obedience and practice of the man, he looks at the practice of the soul; for the soul is the man in God's sight, "for the Lord seeth not as man seeth, for he looketh on the heart."

And thus it is, that obedience, good works, good fruits, are to be taken, when given in scripture as a sure evidence to our own consciences of a true principle of grace: Even as including the obedience and practice of the soul, as preceding and governing the actions of the body. When practice is given

* Scripture Doctrine of Salvation, Sermon I, p. 11.

in scripture as the main evidence to others of our true Christianity, then is meant *that* in our practice which is visible to them, even our outward actions: But when practice is given as a sure evidence of our real Christianity to our own consciences, then is meant *that* in our practice which is visible to our own consciences; which is not only the motion of our bodies, but the exertion of the soul, which directs and commands that motion; which is more directly and immediately under the view of our own consciences, than the act of the body. And that this is the intent of the scripture, not only does the nature and reason of the thing shew, but it is plain by the scripture itself. Thus it is evident, that when Christ, at the conclusion of his sermon on the mount, speaks of doing or practising those sayings of his, as the grand sign of professors being true disciples, without which he likens them to a man that built his house upon the sand, and with which, to a man that built his house upon a rock; he has a respect, not only to the outward behavior, but to the inward exercise of the mind in that behavior: As is evident by observing what those preceding sayings of his are that he refers to, when he speaks of our doing or practising them; and we shall find they are such as these: "Blessed are the poor in spirit; blessed are they that mourn; blessed are the meek; blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness; blessed are the merciful; blessed are the pure in heart; whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, &c. whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, &c. love your enemies; take no thought for your life," and others of the like nature, which imply inward exercises: And when Christ says, John xiv. 2. "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me;" he has evidently a special respect to that command several times repeated in the same discourse (which he calls by way of eminence, his commandment) that they should love one another, as he had loved them (see chap. xiii. 34, *35*, and chap. xv. 10, 12, 13, 14.) But this command respects chiefly an exercise of the mind or heart, though exerted in practice. So when the Apostle John says, 1 John ii. 3. "Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his com-

mandments ;" he has plainly a principal respect to the same command, as appears by what follows, ver. 7.....11, and 2d Epist. ver. 5, 6, and when we are told in scripture that men shall at the last day be judged according to their works, and all shall receive according to the things done in the body ; it is not to be understood only of outward acts ; for if so, why is God so often spoken of as searching the hearts and trying the reins, " that he may render to every one according to his works ? As Rev. ii. 23. And all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts ; and I will give unto every one according to his works, Jer. xvii. 9, 10. " I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man acccording to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings." But if by his ways, and the fruit of his doings, is meant only the actions of his body, what need of searching the heart and reins in order to know them ? Hezekiah in his sickness pleads his practice as an evidence of his title to God's favor, as including not only his outward actions, but what was in his heart, Isa. xxxviii. 3. " Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart."

Though in this great evidence of sincerity that the scripture gives us, what is inward is of greatest importance ; yet what is outward is included and intended, as connected with the practical exertion of grace in the will, directing and commanding the actions of the body. And hereby are effectually cut off all pretensions that any man can have to evidences of godliness, who externally lives wickedly ; because the great evidence lies in that inward exercise and practice of the soul, which consists in the acts of the will, commanding outward acts. But it is known, that these commanding acts of the will are not one way, and the actions of the bodily organs another : For the unalterable law of nature is, that they should be united, as long as soul and body are united, and the organs are not so destroyed as to be incapable of those motions that the soul commands. Thus it would be ridiculous for a man to plead, that the commanding act of his will was to go to the public worship, while his feet carry him to a tavern or brothel-

house ; or that the commanding act of his will was to give such a piece of money he had in his hand to a poor beggar, while his hand at the same instant kept it back, and held it fast.

Secondly, I proceed to shew, that Christian practice, taken in the sense that has been explained, is the chief of all the evidences of a saving sincerity in religion, to the consciences of the professors of it ; much to be preferred to the method of the first convictions, enlightenings, and comforts in conversion, or any immanent discoveries or exercises of grace whatsoever, that begin and end in contemplation.* The evidence of this appears by the following arguments.

Argument I.....Reason plainly shews, that those things which put it to the proof what men will actually cleave to and prefer in their practice, when left to follow their own choice and inclinations, are the proper trial what they do really prefer in their hearts. Sincerity in religion, as has been observed already, consists in setting God highest in the heart, in choosing him before other things, in having a heart to sell all for Christ, &c. But a man's actions are the proper trial what a man's heart prefers. As for instance, when it is so that God and other things come to stand in competition, God is as it were set before a man on one hand, and his worldly interest or pleasure on the other (as it often is so in the course of a man's life) his behavior in such case, in actually cleaving to the one and forsaking the other, is the proper trial which he prefers. Sincerity consists in forsaking all for Christ in heart ; but to forsake all for Christ in heart, is the very same thing as to have an heart to forsake all for Christ ; but certainly the proper trial whether a man has an heart to forsake all for Christ, is his being actually put to it, the having Christ

* " Look upon John, Christ's beloved disciple and bosom companion! He had received the anointing to know him that is true, and he knew that he knew him, 1 John ii. 3. But how did he know that ? He might be deceived ; (as it is strange to see what a melancholy fancy will do, and the effects of it ; as honest men are reputed to have weak brains, and never saw the depths of the secrets of God) what is his last proof ? " Because we keep his commandments." *Shepard's Parable*, Part I. p. 131.

and other things coming in competition, that he must actually or practically cleave to one and forsake the other. To forsake all for Christ in heart, is the same thing as to have a heart to forsake all for Christ when called to it: But the highest proof to ourselves and others, that we have an heart to forsake all for Christ when called to it, is actually doing it when called to it, or so far as called to it. To follow Christ in heart is to have an heart to follow him. To deny ourselves in heart for Christ, is the same thing as to have an heart to deny ourselves for him in fact. The main and most proper proof of a man's having an heart to any thing, concerning which he is at liberty to follow his own inclinations, and either to do or not to do as he pleases, is his doing of it. When a man is at liberty whether to speak or keep silence, the most proper evidence of his having an heart to speak, is his speaking. When a man is at liberty whether to walk or sit still, the proper proof of his having an heart to walk, is his walking. Godliness consists not in an heart to intend to do the will of God, but in an heart to do it. The children of Israel in the wilderness had the former, of whom we read, Deut. v. 27, 28, 29. "Go thou near, and hear all that the Lord our God shall say; and speak thou unto us all that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee, and we will hear it, and do it. And the Lord heard the voice of your words, when ye spake unto me; and the Lord said unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken unto thee; they have well said all that they have spoken. O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!" The people manifested that they had a heart to intend to keep God's commandments, and to be very forward in those intentions; but God manifests, that this was far from being the thing that he desired, wherein true godliness consists, even an heart actually to keep them."

It is therefore exceedingly absurd, and even ridiculous, for any to pretend that they have a good heart, while they live a wicked life, or do not bring forth the fruit of universal holiness in their practice. For it is proved in fact, that such men

do not love God above all. It is foolish to dispute against plain fact and experience. Men that live in ways of sin, and yet flatter themselves that they shall go to heaven, or expect to be received hereafter as holy persons, without a holy practice, act as though they expected to make a fool of their Judge. Which is implied in what the apostle says (speaking of men's doing good works and living an holy life, thereby exhibiting evidence of their title to everlasting life) Gal. vi. 7. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." As much as to say, "Do not deceive yourselves with an expectation of reaping life everlasting hereafter, if you do not sow to the spirit here; it is in vain to think that God will be made a fool of by you, that he will be shammed and baffled with shadows instead of substance, and with vain pretences, instead of that good fruit which he expects, when the contrary to what you pretend appears plainly in your life, before his face." In this manner the word *mock* is sometimes used in scripture. Thus Delilah says to Sampson, "behold thou hast mocked me, and told me lies." Judges xvi. 10, 13, i. e. "Thou hast baffled me, as though you would have made a fool of me, as if I might be easily turned off with any vain pretence, instead of the truth." So it is said that Lot, when he told his sons in law that God would destroy that place, "he seemed as one that mocked, to his sons in law." Gen. xix. 14. i. e. he seemed as one that would make a game of them, as though they were such credulous fools as to regard such bugbears. But the great Judge, whose eyes are as a flame of fire, will not be mocked or baffled with any pretences, without a holy life. If in his name men have prophesied and wrought miracles, and have had faith, so that they could remove mountains, and cast out devils, and however high their religious affections have been, however great resemblances they have had of grace, and though their hiding place has been so dark and deep, that no human skill nor search could find them out; yet if they are workers or practisers of iniquity, they cannot hide their hypocrisy from their Judge: Job. xxxiv. 22. "There is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide

themselves." Would a wise prince suffer himself to be fooled and baffled by a subject, who should pretend that he was a loyal subject, and should tell his prince that he had an entire affection to him, and that at such and such a time he had experience of it, and felt his affections strongly working towards him, and should come expecting to be accepted and rewarded by his prince, as one of his best friends on that account, though he lived in rebellion against him, following some pretender to his crown, and from time to time stirring up sedition against him? Or would a master suffer himself to be shammed and gulled by a servant, that should pretend to great experiences of love and honor towards him in his heart, and a great sense of his worthiness and kindness to him, when at the same time he refused to obey him, and he could get no service done by him?

ARGUMENT II.....As reason shews, that those things which occur in the course of life, that put it to the proof whether men will prefer God to other things in practice, are the proper trial of the uprightness and sincerity of their hearts; so the same are represented as the proper trial of the sincerity of professors in the scripture. There we find that such things are called by that very name, trials or temptations (which I before observed are both words of the same signification.) The things that put it to the proof, whether men will prefer God to other things in practice, are the difficulties of religion, or those things which occur that make the practice of duty difficult and cross to other principles beside the love of God; because in them, God and other things are both set before men together, for their actual and practical choice; and it comes to this, that we cannot hold to both, but one or the other must be forsaken. And these things are all over the scripture called by the name of trials or proofs.* And they are called by this name, because hereby professors are tried

* 2 Cor. viii. 2. Heb. xi. 36. 1 Pet. i. 7. Chap. iv. 12. Gen. xxii. 1. Deut. viii. 2, 16. Chap. xiii. 3. Exod. xv. 25. Chap. xvi. 4. Judges ii. 22. Chap. iii. 1, 4. Psal. lxvi. 10, 11. Dan. xii. 10. Rev. iii. 10. Job. xxiii. 10. Zech. xiii. 9. James i. 12. Rev. ii. 10. Luke viii. 13. Acts xx. 19. James i. 2, 3. 1 Pet. i. 6.

and proved of what sort they be, whether they be really what they profess and appear to be; and because in them, the reality of a supreme love to God is brought to the test of experiment and fact; they are the proper proofs in which it is truly determined by experience, whether men have a thorough disposition of heart to cleave to God or no, Deut. viii. 2. "And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments or no, Judges ii. 21, 22. I also will not henceforth drive out any from before them, of the nations which Joshua left when de died; that through them I may prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of the Lord. So chap. iii. 1, 4, and Exod. xvi. 4.

The scripture, when it calls these difficulties of religion by the name of temptations or trials, explains itself to mean thereby the trial or experiment of their faith, James i. 2, 3. "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. 1 Pet. i. 6, 7. Now, for a season ye are in heaviness, through manifold temptations; that the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold," &c. So the Apostle Paul speaks of that expensive duty of parting with our substance to the poor, as the proof of the sincerity of the love of Christians, 2 Cor. viii. 8. And the difficulties of religion are often represented in scripture, as being the trial of professors, in the same manner that the furnace is the proper trial of gold and silver, Psal. lxvi. 10, 11. "Thou, O God, hast proved us: Thou hast tried us as silver is tried: Thou broughtest us into the net, thou laidest affliction upon our loins." Zech. xiii. 9. And I will bring the third part of them through the fire; and I will refine them as silver is refined; and I will try them as gold is tried." That which has the color and appearance of gold, is put into the furnace to try whether it be what it seems to be, real gold or no. So the difficulties of religion are called trials, because they try those that have the profession and appearance of saints, whether they are what they appear to be, real saints.

If we put true gold into the furnace, we shall find its great value and preciousness: So the truth and inestimable value of the virtues of a true Christian appear when under these trials, 1 Pet. i. 7. "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, might be found unto praise, and honor, and glory." True and pure gold will come out of the furnace in full weight: So true saints, when tried, come forth as gold, Job xxiii. 10. Christ distinguishes true grace from counterfeit by this, that it is gold tried in the fire, Rev. iii. 17, 18. So that it is evident, that these things are called trials in scripture, principally as they try or prove the sincerity of professors. And, from what has now been observed, it is evident that they are the most proper trial or proof of their sincerity; inasmuch as the very meaning of the word trial, as it is ordinarily used in scripture, is the difficulty occurring in the way of a professor's duty, as the trial or experiment of his sincerity. If trial of sincerity be the proper name of these difficulties of religion, then, doubtless, these difficulties of religion are properly and eminently the trial of sincerity; for they are doubtless eminently what they are called by the Holy Ghost: God gives things their name from that which is eminently their nature. And, if it be so, that these things are the proper and eminent trial, proof, or experiment of the sincerity of professors, then certainly the result of the trial or experiment (that is, persons' behavior or practice under such trials) is the proper and eminent evidence of their sincerity; for they are called trials or proofs, only with regard to the result, and because the effect is eminently the proof or evidence. And this is the most proper proof and evidence to the conscience of those that are the subjects of these trials. For, when God is said by these things to try men, and prove them, to see what is in their hearts, and whether they will keep his commandments or no; we are not to understand, that it is for his own information, or that he may obtain evidence himself of their sincerity; (for he needs no trials for his information)

but chiefly for their conviction, and to exhibit evidence to their consciences.*

Thus, when God is said to prove Israel by the difficulties they met with in the wilderness, and by the difficulties they met with from their enemies in Canaan, to know what was in their hearts, whether they would keep his commandments or no; it must be understood, that it was to discover them to themselves, that they might know what was in their own hearts. So when God tempted or tried Abraham with that difficult command of offering up his son, it was not for his satisfaction, whether he feared God or no, but for Abraham's own greater satisfaction and comfort, and the more clear manifestation of the favor of God to him. When Abraham had proved faithful under this trial, God says to him, "Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me." Which plainly implies, that in this practical exercise of Abraham's grace under this trial, was a clearer evidence of the truth of his grace, than ever was before; and the greatest evidence to Abraham's conscience; because God himself gives it to Abraham as such, for his comfort and rejoicing; and speaks of it to him as what might be the greatest evidence to his conscience of his being upright in the sight of his Judge. Which proves what I say, that holy practice, under trials, is the highest evidence of the sincerity of professors to their own consciences. And we find that Christ, from time to time, took the same method to convince the consciences of those that pretended friendship to him, and to shew them what they were. This was the method he took with the rich young man, Matth. xix. 16, &c. He seemed to shew a great respect to Christ; he came kneeling to him, and called him good Master, and made a great profession of obedience

* "I am persuaded, as Calvin is, that all the several trials of men are to shew them to themselves, and to the world, that they be but counterfeits; and to make saints known to themselves the better. Rom. v. 5. Tribulation works trial, and that hope. Prov. xvii. 3. If you will know whether it will hold weight, the trial will tell you." *Shepard's Parable*, Part I, p. 191.

to the commandments; but Christ tried him, by bidding him go and sell all that he had, and give to the poor, and come and take up his cross and follow him; telling him, that then he should have treasure in heaven. So he tried another that we read of, Matth. viii. 20. He made a great profession of respect to Christ: Says he, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. Christ immediately puts his friendship to the proof, by telling him, that the foxes had holes, and the birds of the air had nests, but that the Son of Man had not where to lay his head. And thus Christ is wont still to try professed disciples in general, in his providence. So the seed sown, in every kind of ground, stony ground, thorny ground, and good ground, which, in all appears alike, when it first springs up; yet is tried, and the difference made to appear, by the burning heat of the sun.

Seeing therefore, that these are the things that God makes use of to try us, it is undoubtedly the surest way for us to pass a right judgment on ourselves, to try ourselves by the same things. These trials of his are not for his information, but for ours; therefore we ought to receive our information from thence. The surest way to know our gold, is to look upon it and examine it in God's furnace, where he tries it for that end, that we may see what it is. If we have a mind to know whether a building, stands strong or no, we must look upon it when the wind blows. If we would know whether that which appears in the form of wheat, has the real substance of wheat, or be only chaff, we must observe it when it is winnowed. If we would know whether a staff be strong, or a rotten broken reed, we must observe it when it is leaned on, and weight is borne upon it. If we would weigh ourselves justly, we must weigh ourselves in God's scales, that he makes use of to weigh us.* These trials, in

* Dr. Sibbs, in his Bruised Reed, says, "When Christ's will cometh in competition with any worldly loss or gain, yet, if then, in that particular case, the heart will stoop to Christ, it is a true sign. For the truest trial of the power of grace, is in such particular cases as touch us the nearest; for there our corruption maketh the greatest head. When Christ came home to the young man in the gospel, he lost a disciple of him."

the course of our practice, are as it were the balances in which our hearts are weighed, or in which Christ and the world, or Christ and his competitors, as to the esteem and regard they have in our hearts are weighed, or are put into opposite scales, by which there is opportunity to see which preponderates. When a man is brought to the dividing of paths, the one of which leads to Christ, and the other to the object of his lusts, to see which way he will go, or is brought, and as it were set between Christ and the world, Christ on the right hand, and the world on the left, so that, if he goes to one, he must leave the other, to see which his heart inclines most to, or which preponderates in his heart; this is just the same thing as laying Christ and the world in two opposite scales; and his going to the one, and leaving the other, is just the same thing as the sinking of one scale, and rising of the other. A man's practice, therefore, under the trials of God's providence, is as much the proper evidence of the superior inclination of his heart, as the motion of the balance, with different weights, in opposite scales, is the proper experiment of the superior weight.

Argument III. Another argument, that holy practice, in the sense which has been explained, is the highest kind of evidence of the truth of grace to the consciences of Christians, is, that in practice, grace, in scripture style, is said to be made perfect, or to be finished. So the Apostle James says, James ii. 22. "Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect, or finished?" (as the word in the original properly signifies.) So the love of God is said to be made perfect, or finished, in keeping his commandments. 1 John ii. 4, 5. "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him: But, whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected." The commandment of Christ, which the apostle has especial respect to, when he here speaks of our keeping his commandments, is (as I observed before) that great commandment of his, which respects deeds of love to our brethren, as appears by the following verses. Again, the love of God is said to

be perfected in the same sense, chap. iv. 12. "If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us." Here, doubtless, the apostle has still respect to loving one another, in the same manner that he had explained in the preceding chapter, speaking of loving one another, as a sign of the love of God, verse 17, 18. "Whoso hath this world's goods, and shutteth up his bowels, &c. how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed (or in work) and in truth. By thus loving in work, the apostle says, the love of God is perfected in us." Grace is said to be perfected or sinished in holy practice, as therein it is brought to its proper effect, and to that exercise which is the end of the principle; the tendency and design of grace herein is reached, and its operation completed and crowned. As the tree is made perfect in the fruit; it is not perfected in the seed's being planted in the ground; it is not perfected in the first quickening of the seed, and in its putting forth root and sprout; nor is it perfected when it comes up out of the ground; nor is it perfected in bringing forth leaves; nor yet in putting forth blossoms: But, when it has brought forth good ripe fruit, then it is perfected, therein it reaches its end, the design of the tree is finished: All that belongs to the tree is completed and brought to its proper effect in the fruit. So is grace in its practical exercises. Grace is said to be made perfect or finished in its work or fruit, in the same manner as it is said of sin, James i. 15. "When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." Here are three steps; first, sin in its principle or habit, in the being of lust in the heart; and nextly, here is its conceiving, consisting in the immanent exercises of it in the mind; and lastly, here is the fruit that was conceived actually, brought forth in the wicked work and practice. And this the apostle calls the finishing or perfecting of sin: for the word, in the original, is the same that is translated perfected in those forementioned places.

Now, certainly if it be so, if grace be in this manner made perfect in its fruit, if these practical exercises of grace

are those exercises wherein grace is brought to its proper effect and end, and the exercises wherein whatsoever belongs to its design, tendency and operation, is completed and crowned; then these exercises must be the highest evidences of grace, above all other exercises. Certainly the proper nature and tendency of every principle must appear best and most fully in its most perfect exercises, or in those exercises wherein its nature is most completely exerted, and in its tendency most fully answered and crowned, in its proper effect and end. If we would see the proper nature of any thing whatsoever, and see it in its full distinction from other things; let us look upon it in the finishing of it. The Apostle James says, by works is faith made perfect; and introduces this as an argument to prove, that works are the chief evidence of faith, whereby the sincerity of the professors of faith is justified, James ii. And the Apostle John, after he had once and again told us that love was made perfect in keeping Christ's commandments, observes, 1 John iv. 18. That perfect love casteth out fear; meaning (at least in part) love made perfect in this sense; agreeable to what he had said in the foregoing chapter, "That, by loving in deed, or work, we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts, verse 18, 19.

Argument IV....Another thing which makes it evident, that holy practice is the principal evidence that we ought to make use of in judging both of our own and others' sincerity, is, that this evidence is above all others insisted on in scripture. A common acquaintance with the scripture, together with a little attention and observation, will be sufficient to shew to any one that this is ten times more insisted on as a note of true piety, throughout the scripture, from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelations, than any thing else. And, in the New Testament, where Christ and his apostles do expressly, and of declared purpose, lay down signs of true godliness, this is almost wholly insisted on. It may be observed, that Christ, and his apostles, do not only often say those things, in their discoursing on the great doctrines of religion, which do shew what the nature of true

godliness must be, or from whence the nature and signs of it may be inferred by just consequence, and often occasionally mention many things which do appertain to godliness; but they do also often, of set purpose, give signs and marks for the trial of professors, putting them upon trying themselves by the signs they give, introducing what they say, with such like expressions as these: "By this you shall know, that you know God: By this are manifest the children of God, and the children of the devil: He that hath this, builds on a good foundation; he that hath it not, builds on the sand; Hereby we shall assure our hearts: He is the man that loveth Christ," &c. But I can find no place, where either Christ or his apostles do, in this manner, give signs of godliness, (though the places are many) but where Christian practice is almost the only thing insisted on. Indeed, in many of these places, love to the brethren is spoken of as a sign of godliness; and, as I have observed before, there is no particular virtuous affection, or disposition, so often expressly spoken of as a sign of true grace, as our having love one to another: But then the scriptures explain themselves to intend chiefly this love as exercised and expressed in practice, or in deeds of love. So does the Apostle John, who, above all others, insists on love to the brethren as a sign of godliness, most expressly explain himself, in that 1 John iii. 14, &c. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren: He that loveth not his brother, abideth in death. Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us love, not in word, neither in tongue, but in deed (i. e. in deeds of love) and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him." So that when the scripture so much insists on our loving one another, as a great sign of godliness, we are not thereby to understand the immanent workings of affection which men feel one to another, so much as the soul's practising all the duties of the second table of the law; all which the New Testament tells us again and again, a true love one

to another comprehends, Rom. xiii. 8, and 10, Gal. v. 14, Matth. xxii. 39, 40. So that, really there is no place in the New Testament where the declared design is to give signs of godliness, but that holy practice, and keeping Christ's commandments, is the mark chosen out from all others to be insisted on. Which is an invincible argument, that it is the chief of all the evidences of godliness: Unless we suppose that when Christ and his apostles, on design set themselves about this business of giving signs, by which professing Christians, in all ages, might determine their state; they did not know how to choose signs so well as we could have chosen for them. But, if we make the word of Christ our rule, then undoubtedly those marks which Christ and his apostles did chiefly lay down, and give to us, that we might try ourselves by them, those same marks we ought especially to receive, and chiefly to make use of, in the trial of ourselves.* And surely those things, which Christ and his apostles chiefly insisted on, in the rules they gave, ministers ought chiefly to insist on in the rules they give. To insist much on those things that the scripture insists little on, and to insist very little on those things on which the scripture insists much, is a dangerous thing; because it is going out of God's way, and is to judge ourselves, and guide others, in an unscriptural manner. God knew which way of leading and guiding souls was safest and best for them: He insisted so much on some things, because he knew it to be needful that they should be insisted on; and let other things more alone as a wise God, because he knew it was not best for us, so much to lay the weight of the trial there. As the Sabbath was made for man, so the scriptures were made for man; and they are, by infinite wisdom, fitted for our use and benefit. We should, therefore, make them our guide in all things, in our thoughts of religion, and of ourselves. And for us to make that great which the scripture makes little,

* "It is a sure rule, says Dr. Preston, that, what the scriptures bestow much words on, we should have much thoughts on: And what the Holy Ghost urgeth most, we should prize most." *Church's Carriage.*

and that little which the scripture makes great, tends to give us a monstrous idea of religion; and (at least indirectly and gradually) to lead us wholly away from the right rule, and from a right opinion of ourselves, and to establish delusion and hypocrisy.

ARGUMENT V.....Christian practice is plainly spoken of in the word of God, as the main evidence of the truth of grace, not only to others, but to men's own consciences. It is not only more spoken of and insisted on than other signs, but in many places where it is spoken of, it is represented as the chief of all evidences. This is plain in the manner of expression from time to time. If God were now to speak from heaven to resolve our doubts concerning signs of godliness, and should give some particular sign, that by it all might know whether they were sincerely godly or not, with such emphatical expressions as these, the man that has such a qualification or mark, "that is the man that is a true saint, that is the very man, by this you may know, this is the thing by which it is manifest who are saints and who are sinners, such men as these are saints indeed;" should not we look upon it as a thing beyond doubt, that this was given as a special, and eminently distinguishing note of true godliness? But this is the very case with respect to the sign of grace I am speaking of; God has again and again uttered himself in his word in this very manner, concerning Christian practice, as John xiv. "he that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." Thus Christ in this place gives to the disciples, not so much to guide them in judging of others, as to apply to themselves for their own comfort after his departure, as appears by every word of the context. And by the way I would observe, that not only the emphasis with which Christ utters himself is remarkable, but also his so much insisting on, and repeating the matter, as he does in the context; verse 15. "If ye love me, keep my commandments. Verse 23. If a man love me, he will keep my words. And verse 24. He that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings. And in the next chapter over and over; verse 2. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away; and

every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it. *Verse* 8. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit, so shall ye be my disciples. Verse 14. Ye are my friends, *if* ye do whatsoever I command you. We have this mark laid down with the same emphasis again, John viii. 31. *If* ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed. And again, 1 John ii. 3, hereby do we know that we know him, *if* we keep his commandments. And verse 5. Whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected; hereby know we, that we are in him. And chapter iii. 18, *19*, let us love in deed, and, in truth; hereby we know that we are of the truth." What is translated *hereby* would have been a little more emphatical, if it had been rendered more literally from the original, by this we do know.....And how evidently is holy practice spoken as the grand note of distinction between the children of God and the children of the devil, in verse 10, of the same chapter? "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil." Speaking of a holy, and a wicked practice, as may be seen in all the context; as verse 3. "Every man that hath this hope *in him*, purifieth himself, even as he is pure. Verse 6.....10. "Whosoever abideth in him, sinneth not; whosoever sinneth, hath not seen him, neither known him. Little children, let no man deceive you; he that doth righteousness, is righteous, even as he is righteous: He that committeth sin is *of the* devil.....Whosoever is born of God, sinneth not.....Whosoever doth not righteousness, is not of God. So we have the like emphasis, 2 John, 6. This is love, that we walk after his commandments; that is as (as we must understand it) this is the proper evidence of love. So 1 John v. iii. This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments." So the Apostle James, speaking of the proper evidences of true and pure religion, says, James i. 27. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father, is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." We have the like emphatical expressions used about the same thing in the Old Testament, Job xxviii. 28. "And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of

the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding. Jer. xxii. 15, 16. Did not thy father eat and drink, and do judgment and justice? He judged the cause of the poor and needy: Was not this to know me? Saith the Lord. Psal. xxxiv. 11, &c. Come, ye children, unto me, and I will teach you the fear of the Lord.....Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile; depart from evil, and do good; seek peace and pursue it." Psal. xv, at the beginning, "Who shall abide in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, &c. Psal. xxiv. 3, 4. Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart, &c. Psal. cxix. 1. Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord. Verse vi. Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect to all thy commandments. Prov. viii. 13. The fear of the Lord is to hate evil."

So the scripture never uses such emphatical expressions concerning any other signs of hypocrisy, and unsoundness of heart, as concerning an unholy practice. So Gal. vi. 7. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, &c. shall inherit the kingdom of God. Eph. v. 5, 6. For this ye know, that no whoremonger nor unclean person, &c. hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ, and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words. 1 John iii. 7, 8. Little children, let no man deceive you; he that doth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous; he that committeth sin, is of the devil. Chap. ii. 4. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. And chap. i. 6. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. James i. 26. If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain. Chap. iii. 14, 15. If ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom decendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, dev-

lish. Psal. cxxv. 5. As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the Lord shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity. Isa. xxxv. 8. An high way shall be there, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it. Rev. xxi. 27. And there shall in no wise enter into it, whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie." And in many places, "Depart from me, I know you not, ye that work iniquity."

ARGUMENT VI.....Another thing which makes it evident, that holy practice is the chief of all the signs of the sincerity of professors, not only to the world, but to their own consciences is, that this is the grand evidence which will hereafter be made use of, before the judgment seat of God; according to which his judgment will be regulated, and the state of every professor of religion unalterably determined. In the future judgment, there will be an open trial of professors and evidences will be made use of in the judgment. For God's future judging of men, in order to their eternal retribution, will not be his trying, and finding out, and passing a judgment upon the state of men's hearts, in his own mind; but it will be, a declarative judgment; and the end of it will be, not God's forming a judgment within himself, but the manifestation of his judgment, and the righteousness of it, to men's own consciences, and to the world. And therefore the day of judgment is called the day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God, Rom. ii. 5. And the end of God's future trial and judgment of men, as to the part that each one in particular is to have in the judgment, will be especially the clear manifestation of God's righteous judgment, with respect to him, to his conscience; as is manifest by Matth. xviii. 31, to the end. Chap. xx. 8....15. Chap. xxii. 11, 12, 13. Chap. xxv. 19....30, and verse 35, to the end. Luke xix. 15....23. And therefore though God needs no medium, whereby to make the truth evident to himself, yet evidences will be made use of in his future judging of men. And doubtless the evidences that will be made use of in their trial, will be such as will be best fitted to serve the ends of the judgment; viz. the manifestation of the righteous judgment of God, not only to

the world, but to men's own consciences. But the scriptures do abundantly teach us, that the grand evidences which the Judge will make use of in the trial, for these ends, according to which the judgment of every one shall be regulated, and the irreversible sentence passed, will be men's works, or practice, here in this world, Rev. xx. 12. "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened;....and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. So verse 13. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged every man according to their works. 2 Cor. v. 10. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, whether it be good or bad." So men's practice is the only evidence that Christ represents the future judgment as regulated by, in that most particular description of the day of judgment, which we have in the Holy Bible, Matth. xxv. at the latter end. See also Rom. ii. 6, 13. Jer. xvii. 10. Job. xxxiv. 11. Prov. xxiv. 12. Jer. xxxii. 19. Rev. xxii. 12. Matth. xvi. 27. Rev. ii. 23. Ezek. xxxiii. 20. 1 Pet. i. 17. The Judge at the day of judgment, will not (for the conviction of men's own consciences, and to manifest them to the world) go about to examine men, as to the method of their experiences, or set every man to tell his story of the manner of his conversion; but his works will be brought forth, as evidences of what he is, what he has done in darkness and in light, Eccl. xii. 14. "For God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." In the trial that professors shall be the subjects of, in the future judgment, God will make use of the same evidences, to manifest them to themselves and to the world, which he makes use of to manifest them, in the temptations or trials of his providence here, viz. their practice, in cases wherein Christ and other things come into actual and immediate competition. At the day of Judgment, God, for the manifestation of his righteous judgment, will weigh professors in a balance that is visible. And the balance will be

the same that he weighs men in now, which has been already described.

Hence we may undoubtedly infer, that men's works (taken in the sense that has been explained) are the highest evidences by which they ought to try themselves. Certainly that which our supreme Judge will chiefly make use of to judge us by, when we come to stand before him, we should chiefly make use of, to judge ourselves by.* If it had not been revealed in what manner, and by what evidence the Judge would proceed with us hereafter, how natural would it be for one to say, "O that I knew what token God will chiefly look for and insist upon in the last and decisive judgment, and which he expects that all should be able to produce, who would then be accepted of him, and according to which sentence shall be passed; that I might know what token or evidence especially to look at and seek after now, as I would be sure not to fail then." And seeing God has so plainly and abundantly revealed what this token or evidence is, surely if we act wisely, we shall regard it as of the greatest importance.

Now from all that has been said, I think it to be abundantly manifest, that Christian practice is the most proper evidence of the gracious sincerity of professors, to themselves and others; and the chief of all the marks of grace, the sign of signs, and evidence of evidences, that which seals and crowns all other signs———I had rather have the testimony of my conscience, that I have such a saying of my Supreme Judge on my side, as that, John xiv. 21. "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me;" than the judgment and fullest approbation of all the wise, sound, and experienced divines, that have lived this thousand years, on the most exact and critical examination of my ex-

* "That which God maketh a rule of his own judgment, as that by which he judgeth of every man, that is a sure rule for every man to judge himself by. That which we shall be judged by at the last day, is a sure rule to apply to ourselves for the present. Now by our obedience and works he judgeth us. "He will give to every man according to his works." *Dr. Preston's Church's Carriage.*

periences, as to the manner of my conversion. Not that there are no other good evidences of a state of grace but this. There may be other exercises of grace, besides these efficient exercises, which the saints may have in contemplation, that may be very satisfying to them, but yet this is the chief and most proper evidence. There may be several good evidences that a tree is a figtree; but the highest and most proper evidence of it is, that it actually bears figs. It is possible, that a man may have a good assurance of a state of grace, at his first conversion, before he has had opportunity to gain assurance, by this great evidence I am speaking of....If a man hears that a great treasure is offered him, in a distant place, on condition that he will prize it so much, as to be willing to leave what he possesses at home, and go a journey for it, over the rocks and mountains that are in the way, to the place where it is; it is possible the man may be well assured, that he values the treasure to the degree spoken of, as soon as the offer is made him: He may feel within him, a willingness to go for the treasure, beyond all doubt; but yet, this does not hinder but that his actual going for it, is the highest and most proper evidence of his being willing, not only to others, but to himself. But then as an evidence to himself, his outward actions, and the motions of his body in his journey, are not considered alone, exclusive of the action of his mind, and a consciousness within himself, of the thing that moves him, and the end he goes for; otherwise his bodily motion is no evidence to him of his prizing the treasure. In such a manner is Christian practice the most proper evidence of a saving value of the pearl of great price, and treasure hid in the field.

Christian practice is the sign of signs, in this sense, that it is the great evidence, which confirms and crowns all other signs of godliness. There is no one grace of the Spirit of God, but that Christian practice is the most proper evidence of the truth of it. As it is with the members of our bodies, and all our utensils, the proper proof of the soundness and goodness of them, is in the use of them: So it is with our graces (which are given to be used in practice, as much as our hands and feet, or the tools with which we work, or the arms

with which we fight) the proper trial and proof of them is in their exercise in practice. Most of the things we use are serviceable to us, and so have their serviceableness proved, in some pressure, straining, agitation, or collision. So it is with a bow, a sword, an axe, a saw, a cord, a chain, a staff, a foot, a tooth, &c. And they that are so weak, as not to bear the strain or pressure we need to put them to, are good for nothing. So it is with all the virtues of the mind. The proper trial and proof of them, is in being exercised under those temptations and trials that God brings us under, in the course of his providence, and in being put to such service as strains hard upon the principles of nature.

Practice is the proper proof of the true and saving knowledge of God; as appears by that of the apostle already mentioned, "hereby do we know that we know him, that we keep his commandments." It is in vain for us to profess that we know God, if in works we deny him. Tit. i. 16. "And if we know God, but glorify him not as God; our knowledge will only condemn us, and not save us, Rom. i. 21. The great note of that knowledge which saves and makes happy, is, that it is practical, John xiii. 17. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them. Job xxviii. 28. To depart from evil is understanding."

Holy practice is the proper evidence of repentance. When the Jews professed repentance, when they came confessing their sins, to John, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins; he directed them to the right way of getting and exhibiting proper evidences of the truth of their repentance, when he said to them, "Bring forth fruits meet for repentance." Matth. iii. 8. Which was agreeable to the practice of the Apostle Paul; see Acts xxvi. 20. Pardon and mercy are from time to time promised to him who has this evidence of true repentance, that he forsakes his sin, Prov. xxviii. 13, and Isa. lv. 7, and many other places.

Holy practice is the proper evidence of a saving faith. It is evident that the Apostle James speaks of works, as what do eminently justify faith, or (which is the same thing) justify the professors of faith, and vindicate and manifest the

sincerity of their profession, not only to the world, but to their own consciences; as is evident by the instance he gives of Abraham, James ii. 21....24. And in verse 20, and 26, he speaks of the practical and working nature of faith, as the very life and soul of it; in the same manner that the active nature and substance, which is in the body of a man, is the life and soul of that. And if so, doubtless practice is the proper evidence of the life and soul of true faith, by which it is distinguished from a dead faith. For doubtless, practice is the most proper evidence of a practical nature, and operation the most proper evidence of an operative nature.

Practice is the best evidence of a saving belief of the truth. That is spoken of as the proper evidence of the truth's being in a professing Christian, that he walks in the truth, 3 John 3. "I rejoiced greatly when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth."

Practice is the most proper evidence of a true coming to Christ, and accepting of, and closing with him. A true and saving coming to Christ, is (as Christ often teaches) a coming so as to forsake all for him. And, as was observed before, to forsake all for Christ in heart, is the same thing as to have a heart actually to forsake all; but the proper evidence of having a heart actually to forsake all, is, indeed, actually to forsake all so far as called to it. If a prince make suit to a woman in a far country, that she would forsake her own people, and father's house, and come to him to be his bride; the proper evidence of the compliance of her heart with the king's suit, is her actually forsaking her own people and father's house, and coming to him.... By this her compliance with the king's suit is made perfect, in the same sense that the Apostle James says, By works is faith made perfect.* Christ promises us eter-

* "Our real taking of Christ appears in our actions and works, Isa. i. 19. If ye consent and obey, ye shall eat the good things of the land. That is, if ye will consent to take JEHOVAH for your Lord and King: If ye give consent, there is the first thing; but that is not enough, but if ye also obey. The consent that standeth in the inward act of the mind, the truth of it will be

nal life, on condition of our coming to him: But it is such a coming as he directed the young man to, who came to inquire what he should do that he might have eternal life; Christ bade him go and sell all that he had, and come to him, and follow him. If he had consented in his heart to the proposal, and had therein come to Christ in his heart, the proper evidence of it would have been his doing of it; and therein his coming to Christ would have been made perfect. When Christ called Levi the publican, when sitting at the receipt of custom, and in the midst of his worldly gains; the closing of Levi's heart with this invitation of his Saviour to come to him, was manifested, and made perfect by his actually rising up, leaving all, and following him, Luke v.27,28. Christ, and other things, are set before us together, for us practically to cleave to one, and forsake the other: In such a case, a practical cleaving to Christ is a practical acceptance of Christ; as much as a beggar's reaching out his hand and taking a gift that is offered, is his practical acceptance of the gift. Yea, that act of the soul that is in cleaving to Christ in practice is itself the most perfect coming of the soul to Christ.

Practice is the most proper evidence of trusting in Christ for salvation. The proper signification of the word *trust*, according to the more ordinary use of it, both in common speech and in the holy scriptures, is the emboldening and encouragement of a person's mind, to run some venture in practice, or in something that he does on the credit of another's sufficiency and faithfulness. And, therefore, the proper evidence of his trusting, is the venture he runs in what he does. He is not properly said to run any venture, in a dependence on any thing, that does nothing on that dependence, or whose practice is no otherwise than if he had no dependence. For a man to run a venture on a dependence on another, is for him to do something from that dependence by which he seems to expose himself, and which he would

seen in your obedience, in the acts of your lives. If ye consent and obey, ye shall eat the good things of the land; that is, you shall take of all that he hath that is convenient for you; for then you are married to him in truth, and have an interest in all his goods." *Dr. Preston's Church's Carriage.*

not do, were it not for that dependence. And, therefore, it is in complying with the difficulties, and seeming dangers of Christian practice, in a dependence on Christ's sufficiency and faithfulness to bestow eternal life, that persons are said to venture themselves upon Christ, and trust in him for happiness and life. They depend on such promises, as that, Matth. x. 39. "He that loseth his life for my sake, shall find it." And so they part with all, and venture their all, in a dependence on Christ's sufficiency and truth. And this is the scripture notion of trusting in Christ, in the exercise of a saving faith in him. Thus Abraham, the father of believers, trusted in Christ, and by faith forsook his own country, in a reliance on the covenant of grace God established with him, Heb. xi. 8, 9. Thus, also "Moses, by faith refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season," Heb. xi. 23, &c. So by faith, others exposed themselves to be stoned and sawn asunder, or slain with the sword; "endured the trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, bonds and imprisonments, and wandered about in sheep skins, and goat skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented." And in this sense the Apostle Paul, by faith trusted in Christ, and committed himself to him, venturing himself, and his whole interest, in a dependence on the ability and faithfulness of his Redeemer, under great persecutions, and in suffering the loss of all things, 2 Tim. i. 12, "for the which cause I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded, that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."

If a man should have word brought him from the king of a distant island, that he intended to make him his heir, if, upon receiving the tidings, he immediately leaves his native land and friends, and all that he has in the world, to go to that country, in a dependence on what he hears, then he may be said to venture himself, and all that he has in the world upon it. But, if he only sits still, and hopes for the promised benefit, inwardly pleasing himself with the thoughts of it;

he cannot properly be said to venture himself upon it; he runs no venture in the case; he does nothing, otherwise than he would do, if he had received no such tidings, by which he would be exposed to any suffering in case all should fail. So he that, on the credit of what he hears of a future world, and, in a dependence on the report of the gospel, concerning life and immortality, forsakes all, or does so at least, so far as there is occasion, making every thing entirely give place to his eternal interest; he, and he only, may properly be said to venture himself on the report of the gospel. And this is the proper evidence of a true trust in Christ for salvation.

Practice is the proper evidence of a gracious love, both to God and men. The texts that plainly teach this, have been so often mentioned already, that it is needless to repeat them.

Practice is the proper evidence of humility. That expression, and manifestation of humility of heart, which God speaks of, as the great expression of it, that he insists on; that we should look upon as the proper expression and manifestation of it: But this is walking humbly. Micah vi. 8. "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good, and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God."

This is also the proper evidence of the true fear of God, Prov. viii. 13. "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil, Psal. xxxiv. 11, &c. Come, ye children, hearken unto me, and I will teach you the fear of the Lord. Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile: Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace and pursue it. Prov. iii. 7. Fear the Lord, and depart from evil, Prov. xvi. 6. By the fear of the Lord, men depart from evil. Job i. 8. Hast thou considered my servant Job....a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? Chap. ii. 3. Hast thou considered my servant Job....a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? And still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him. Psal. xxxvi. 1. The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, There is no fear of God before his eyes."

So practice, in rendering again according to benefits received, is the proper evidence of true thankfulness. Psal. cxvi. 12. "What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me? 2 Chron. xxxii. 25. But Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him." Paying our vows unto God, and ordering our conversation aright, seem to be spoken of as the proper expression and evidence of true thankfulness, in the 50th Psalm, verse 14. "Offer unto God thanksgiving, and pay thy vows unto the Most High. Verse 23. Whoso offereth praise, glorifieth me: And to him that ordereth his conversation aright, will I shew the salvation of God."

So the proper evidence of gracious desires and longings, and that which distinguishes them from those that are false and vain, is, that they are not idle wishes and wouldings like Balaam's; but effectual in practice, to stir up persons earnestly and thoroughly to seek the things they long for. Psalm xxvii. 4. "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after." Psal. lxiii. 1, 2. "O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee: My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is, to see thy power and thy glory. Verse 8. My soul followeth hard after thee. Cant. i. 4. Draw me, we will run after thee."

Practice is the proper evidence of a gracious hope. 1 John iii. 3. Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself even as he is pure." Patient continuance in well doing, through the difficulties and trials of the Christian course, is often mentioned as the proper expression and fruit of a Christian hope, 1 Thess. i. 3. "Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope. 1 Pet. 1, 13, 14. Wherefore, gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ, as obedient children, &c. Psal. cxix. 166. Lord, I have hoped in thy salvation, and done thy commandments. Psal. lxxviii. 7. That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of the Lord, but keep his commandments."

A cheerful practice of our duty, and doing the will of God, is the proper evidence of a truly holy joy. Isa. lxiv. 5. "Thou meetest him that rejoiceth, and worketh righteousness. Psal. cxix. 111, 112. Thy testimonies have I taken for my heritage for ever; for they are the rejoicing of my heart. I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes alway, even to the end. Verse 14. I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies as much as in all riches. 1 Cor. xiii. 6. Charity rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth. 2 Cor. viii. 2. The abundance of their joy abounded unto the riches of their liberality."

Practice also is the proper evidence of Christian fortitude. The trial of a good soldier is not in his chimney corner, but in the field of battle, 1 Cor. ix. 25, 26. 2 Tim. ii. 3, 4, 5.

And, as the fruit of holy practice is the chief evidence of the truth of grace, so the degree in which experiences have influence on a person's practice, is the surest evidence of the degree of that which is spiritual and divine in his experiences. Whatever pretences persons may make to great discoveries, great love and joys, they are no further to be regarded than they have influence on their practice. Not but that allowances must be made for the natural temper. But that does not hinder, but that the degree of grace is justly measured, by the degree of the effect in practice. For the effect of grace is as great, and the alteration as remarkable, in a very ill natural temper, as another. Although a person of such a temper will not behave himself so well, with the same degree of grace as another, the diversity from what was before conversion, may be as great; because a person of a good natural temper did not behave himself so ill before conversion.

Thus I have endeavored to represent the evidence there is, that Christian practice is the chief of all the signs of saving grace. And, before I conclude this discourse, I would say something briefly in answer to two objections that may possibly be made by some against what has been said upon this head.

OBJECTION I....Some may be ready to say, this seems to be contrary to that opinion, so much received among good people; that professors should judge of their state, chiefly by their inward experience, and that spiritual experiences are the main evidences of true grace.

I answer, it is doubtless a true opinion, and justly much received among good people, that professors should chiefly judge of their state by their experience. But it is a great mistake, that what has been said is at all contrary to that opinion. The chief sign of grace to the consciences of Christians, being Christian practice, in the sense that has been explained, and according to what has been shewn to be the true notion of Christian practice, is not at all inconsistent with Christian experience being the chief evidence of grace. Christian or holy practice is spiritual practice; and that is not the motion of a body that knows not how, nor when, nor wherefore it moves: But spiritual practice in man is the practice of a spirit and body jointly, or the practice of a spirit animating, commanding, and actuating a body to which it is united, and over which it has power given it by the Creator. And, therefore, the main thing, in this holy practice, is the holy action of the mind, directing and governing the motions of the body. And the motions of the body are to be looked upon as belonging to Christian practice, only secondarily, and as they are dependent and consequent on the acts of the soul. The exercises of grace that Christians find, or are conscious to within themselves, are what they experience within themselves; and herein therefore lies Christian experience: And this Christian experience consists as much in those operative exercises of grace in the will, that are immediately concerned in the management of the behavior of the body, as in other exercises. These inward exercises are not the less a part of Christian experience, because they have outward behavior immediately connected with them. A strong act of love to God, is not the less a part of spiritual experience, because it is the act that immediately produces and effects some self-

denying and expensive outward action, which is much to the honor and glory of God.

To speak of Christian experience and practice, as if they were two things, properly and entirely distinct, is to make a distinction without consideration or reason. Indeed, all Christian experience is not properly called practice, but all Christian practice is properly experience. And the distinction that is made between them, is not only an unreasonable, but an unscriptural distinction. Holy practice is one kind or part of Christian experience; and both reason and scripture represent it as the chief, and most important and most distinguishing part of it. So it is represented in Jer. xxii. 15, 16. "Did not thy father eat and drink, and do justice and judgment? He judged the cause of the poor and needy:.... Was not this to know me, saith the Lord?" Our inward acquaintance with God surely belongs to the head of experimental religion: But this, God represents as consisting chiefly in that experience which there is in holy practice. So the exercises of those graces of the love of God, and the fear of God, are a part of experimental religion: But these the scripture represents as consisting chiefly in practice, in those forementioned texts, 1 John v. 3. "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. 2 John 6. This is love, that we walk after his commandments. Psal. xxxiv. 11, &c. Come, ye children, and I will teach you the fear of the Lord: Depart from evil, and do good." Such experiences as these Hezekiah took comfort in, chiefly on his sick bed, when he said, "Remember, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart." And such experiences as these, the Psalmist chiefly insists upon, in the 119th Psalm, and elsewhere.

Such experiences as these the Apostle Paul mainly insists upon, when he speaks of his experiences in his epistles; as, Rom. i. 9. "God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son. 2 Cor. i. 12. For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that....by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world. Chap. iv. 13. We, having the same spirit of faith, according

as it is written, I have believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak. Chap. v. 7. We walk by faith, not by sight. Ver. 14. The love of Christ constraineth us. Chap. vi. 4....7. In all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in labors, in watchings, in fastings. By pureness, by knowledge, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned; by the power of God. Gal. ii. 20. I am crucified with Christ: Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: And the life, which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God. Phil. iii. 7, 8. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ, Col. i. 29.... Whereunto I also labor, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily. 1 Thess. ii. 2. We were bold in our God, to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention. Ver. 8, 9, 10. Being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us. For ye remember, brethren, our labor and travel, laboring night and day. Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably, we behaved ourselves among you." And such experiences as these they were, that this blessed apostle chiefly comforted himself in the consideration of, when he was going to martyrdom, 2 Tim. iv. 6, 7. "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight I have finished my course, I have kept the faith."

And not only does the most important and distinguishing part of Christian experience lie in spiritual practice; but such is the nature of that sort of exercises of grace, wherein spiritual practice consists, that nothing is so properly called by the name of experimental religion. For, that experience, which is in these exercises of grace, that are found and prove effectual at the very point of trial, wherein God proves, which we will actually cleave to, whether Christ or our lusts, is as

has been shown already, the proper experiment of the truth and power of our godliness; wherein its victorious power and efficacy, in producing its proper effect, and reaching its end, is found by experience. This is properly Christian experience, wherein the saints have opportunity to see, by actual experience and trial, whether they have a heart to do the will of God, and to forsake other things for Christ, or no. As that is called experimental philosophy which brings opinions and notions to the test of fact, so is that properly called experimental religion, which brings religious affections and intentions to the like test.

There is a sort of external religious practice, wherein is no inward experience, which no account is made of in the sight of God, but it is esteemed good for nothing. And there is what is called experience, that is without practice, being neither accompanied nor followed with a Christian behavior; and this is worse than nothing. Many persons seem to have very wrong notions of Christian experience and spiritual light and discoveries. Whenever a person finds within him an heart to treat God as God, at the time that he has the trial, and finds his disposition effectual in the experiment, that is the most proper, and most distinguishing experience. And to have, at such a time, that sense of divine things, that apprehension of the truth, importance and excellency of the things of religion, which then sways and prevails, and governs his heart and hands; this is the most excellent spiritual light, and these are the most distinguishing discoveries. Religion consists much in holy affection; but those exercises of affection which are most distinguishing of true religion, are these practical exercises. Friendship between earthly friends consists much in affection; but yet, those strong exercises of affection, that actually carry them through fire and water for each other, are the highest evidences of true friendship.

There is nothing in what has been said, contrary to what is asserted by some sound divines; when they say, that there are no sure evidences of grace, but the acts of grace. For that doth not hinder, but that these operative, productive acts, those exercises of grace that are effectual in practice, may be

the highest evidences above all other kinds of acts of grace. Nor does it hinder, but that, when there are many of these acts and exercises, following one another in a course, under various trials of every kind, the evidence is still heightened; as one act confirms another. A man, once by seeing his neighbor, may have good evidence of his presence; but by seeing him from day to day, and conversing with him, in a course in various circumstances, the evidence is established. The disciples, when they first saw Christ, after his resurrection, had good evidence that he was alive; but, by conversing with him for forty days, and his shewing himself to them alive by many infallible proofs, they had yet higher evidence.*

The witness or seal of the Spirit that we read of, doubtless consists in the effect of the Spirit of God in the heart, in the implantation and exercises of grace there, and so consists in experience. And it is also beyond doubt, that this seal of the Spirit, is the highest kind of evidence of the saints' adoption, that ever they obtain. But in these exercises of grace in practice, that have been spoken of, God gives witness, and sets to his seal, in the most conspicuous, eminent, and evident manner. It has been abundantly found to be true in fact, by the experience of the Christian church, that Christ commonly gives, by his Spirit, the greatest and most joyful evidences to his saints of their sonship, in those effectual exercises of grace

* "The more these visible exercises of grace are renewed, the more certain you will be. The more frequently these actings are renewed, the more abiding and confirmed your assurance will be. A man that has been assured of such visible exercises of grace, may quickly after be in doubt whether he was not mistaken. But when such actings are renewed again and again, he grows more settled and established about his good estate. If a man see a thing once, that makes him sure; but, if afterwards, he fear he was deceived, when he comes to see it again, he is more sure he was not mistaken. If a man read such passages in a book, he is sure it is so. Some months after, some may bear him down, that he was mistaken, so as to make him question it himself; but, when he looks, and reads it again, he is abundantly confirmed. The more men's grace is multiplied, the more their peace is multiplied;" 2 Pet. i. 2. "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you, through the knowledge of God, and Jesus our Lord." *Stoddard's Way to know sincerity and hypocrisy.*

under trials, which have been spoken of; as is manifest in the full assurance, and unspeakable joys of many of the martyrs. Agreeable to that, 1 Pet. iv. 14. "If ye are reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory, and of God resteth upon you." And that in Rom. v. 2, 3. "We rejoice in hope of the glory of God, and glory in tribulations." And agreeable to what the Apostle Paul often declares of what he experienced in his trials. And when the Apostle Peter, in my text, speaks of the joy unspeakable, and full of glory, which the Christians to whom he wrote, experienced; he has respect to what they found under persecution, as appears by the context. Christ's thus manifesting himself, as the friend and saviour of his saints, cleaving to him under trials, seems to have been represented of old, by his coming and manifesting himself, to Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, in the furnace. And when the apostle speaks of the witness of the Spirit, in Rom. viii. 15, 16, 17, he has a more immediate respect to what the Christians experienced, in their exercises of love to God, in suffering persecution; as is plain by the context. He is, in the foregoing verses, encouraging the Christian Romans under their sufferings, that though their bodies be dead, because of sin, yet they should be raised to life again. But it is more especially plain by the verse immediately following, verse 18. "For I reckon, that the sufferings of this present time, are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us." So the apostle has evidently respect to their persecutions, in all that he says to the end of the chapter. So when the apostle speaks of the earnest of the Spirit, which God had given to him, in 2 Cor. v. 5, the context shews plainly that he has respect to what was given him in his great trials and sufferings. And in that promise of the white stone, and new name, to him that overcomes, Rev. ii. 17, it is evident Christ has a special respect to a benefit that Christians should obtain, by overcoming, in the trial they had, in that day of persecution. This appears by verse 13, and many other passages in this epistle to the seven churches of Asia.

Objection II....Some also may be ready to object against what has been said of Christian practice being the chief evidence of the truth of grace, that this is a legal doctrine; and that this making practice a thing of such great importance in religion, magnifies works, and tends to lead men to make too much of their own doings, to the diminution of the glory of free grace, and does not seem well to consist with great gospel doctrine of justification by faith alone.

But this objection is altogether without reason. Which way is it inconsistent with the freeness of God's grace, that holy practice should be a sign of God's grace: It is our works being the price of God's favor, and not their being the sign of it, that is the thing which is inconsistent with the freeness of that favor. Surely the beggar's looking on the money he has in his hands, as a sign of the kindness of him who gave it to him, is in no respect inconsistent with the freeness of that kindness. It is his having money in his hands as the price of a benefit, that is the thing which is inconsistent with the free kindness of the giver. The notion of the freeness of the grace of God to sinners, as that is revealed and taught in the gospel, is not that no holy and amiable qualifications or actions in us shall be a fruit, and so a sign of that grace; but that it is not the worthiness or loveliness of any qualification or action of ours which recommends us to that grace; that kindness is shown to the unworthy and unlovely; that there is great excellency in the benefit bestowed, and no excellency in the subject as the price of it; that goodness goes forth and flows out, from the fulness of God's nature, the fulness of the fountain of good, without any amiableness in the object to draw it. And this is the notion of justification without works (as this doctrine is taught in the scripture) that it is not the worthiness or loveliness of our works, or any thing in us, which is in any wise accepted with God, as a balance for the guilt of sin, or a recommendation of sinners to his acceptance as heirs of life. Thus we are justified only by the righteousness of Christ, and not by our righteousness. And when works are opposed to faith in this affair, and it is said that we are justified by faith and not by works; thereby is meant, that

it is not the worthiness or amiableness of our works, or any thing in us, which recommends us to an interest in Christ and his benefits; but that we have this interest only by faith, or by our souls receiving Christ, or adhering to and closing with him. But that the worthiness or amiableness of nothing in us recommends and brings us to an interest in Christ, is no argument that nothing in us is a sign of an interest in Christ.

If the doctrines of free grace, and justification by faith alone, be inconsistent with the importance of holy practice as a sign of grace; then they are equally inconsistent with the importance of any thing whatsoever in us as a sign of grace, any holiness, or any grace that is in us, or any of our experiences or religion; for it is as contrary to the doctrines of free grace and justification by faith alone, that any of these should be the righteousness which we are justified by, as that holy practice should be so. It is with holy works, as it is with holy qualifications; it is inconsistent with the freeness of gospel grace, that a title to salvation should be given to men for the loveliness of any of their holy qualifications, as much as that it should be given for the holiness of their works. It is inconsistent with the gospel doctrine of free grace, that an interest in Christ and his benefits should be given for the loveliness of a man's true holiness, for the amiableness of his renewed, sanctified, heavenly heart, his love to God, and being like God, or his experience of joy in the Holy Ghost, self emptiness, a spirit to exalt Christ above all, and to give all glory to him, and a heart devoted unto him; I say it is inconsistent with the gospel doctrine of free grace, that a title to Christ's benefits should be given out of regard to the loveliness of any of these, or that any of these should be our righteousness in the affair of justification. And yet this does not hinder the importance of these things as evidences of an interest in Christ. Just so it is with respect to holy actions and works. To make light of works, because we be not justified by works, is the same thing in effect, as to make light of all religion, all grace and holiness, yea, true evangelical holiness, and all gracious experience; for all is included, when

the scripture says, we are not justified by works; for by works in this case, is meant all our own righteousness, religion, or holiness, and every thing that is in us, all the good we do, and all the good which we are conscious of, all external acts, and all internal acts and exercises of grace, and all experiences, and all those holy and heavenly things wherein the life and power, and the very essence of religion do consist, all those great things which Christ and his apostles mainly insisted on in their preaching, and endeavored to promote, as of the greatest consequence in the hearts and lives of men, and all good dispositions, exercises and qualifications of every kind whatsoever; and even faith itself, considered as a part of our holiness. For we are justified by none of these things; and if we were, we should, in a scripture sense, be justified by works. And therefore if it be not legal, and contrary to the evangelical doctrine of justification without works, to insist on any of these, as of great importance, as evidences of an interest in Christ; then no more is it, thus to insist on the importance of holy practice. It would be legal to suppose, that holy practice justifies by bringing us to a title to Christ's benefits, as the price of it, or as recommending to it by its preciousness or excellence; but it is not legal to suppose, that holy practice justifies the sincerity of a believer, as the proper evidence of it. The Apostle James did not think it legal to say, that Abraham our father was justified by works, in this sense. The Spirit that indited the scripture, did not think the great importance and absolute necessity of holy practice, in this respect, to be inconsistent with the freeness of grace; for it commonly teaches them both together; as in Rev. xxi. 6, 7, God says, "I will give unto him that is athirst, of the fountain of the water of life freely;" and then adds, in the very next words, "he that overcometh shall inherit all things." As though behaving well in the Christian race and warfare, were the condition of the promise. So in the next chapter, in the 14th and 15th verses, Christ says, "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life, and enter in through the gates into the city;" and then declares in the 15th verse, "how they

that are of a wicked practice" shall be excluded; and yet in the two verses next following, does with very great solemnity give forth an invitation to all to come and take of the water of life freely; "I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright and morning star. And the Spirit and the bride say, come. And let him that heareth, say, come. And *let him* that is athirst, come; and whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely." So chapter *iii.* 20, 21. "Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me." But then it is added in the next words, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne." And in that great invitation of Christ, Matth. xi. latter end, "Come unto me, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;" Christ adds in the next words, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls; for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light: As though taking the burden of Christ's service, and *imitating* his example, were necessary in order to the promised rest. So in that great invitation to sinners to accept of free grace, Isa. lv. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat, yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price;" even there, in the continuation of the same invitation, the sinner's forsaking his wicked practice is spoken of as necessary to the obtaining mercy, verse 7. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." So the riches of divine grace, in the justification of sinners, is set forth with the necessity of holy practice, Isa. i. 16, &c. "Wash ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, cease to do evil, learn to do well, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white

as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

And in that most solemn invitation of wisdom, Prov. ix. after it is represented what great provision is made, and how that all things were ready, the house built, the beasts killed, the wine mingled, and the table furnished, and the messengers sent forth to invite the guests; then we have the free invitation, verse 4, 5, 6. "Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither; as for him that wanteth understanding (i. e. has no righteousness) she saith to him, Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled." But then in the next breath it follows, "Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding;" as though forsaking sin, and going in the way of holiness, were necessary in order to life. So that the freeness of grace, and the necessity of holy practice, which are thus from time to time joined together in scripture, are not inconsistent one with another. Nor does it at all diminish the honor and importance of faith, that the exercises and effects of faith in practice, should be esteemed the chief signs of it; any more than it lessens the importance of life, that action and motion are esteemed the chief signs of that.

So that in what has been said of the importance of holy practice as the main sign of sincerity; there is nothing legal, nothing derogatory to the freedom and sovereignty of gospel grace, nothing in the least clashing with the gospel doctrine of justification by faith alone, without the works of the law, nothing in the least tending to lessen the glory of the Mediator, and our dependence on his righteousness, nothing infringing on the special prerogatives of faith in the affair of our salvation, nothing in any wise detracting from the glory of God and his mercy, or exalting man, or diminishing his dependence and obligation. So that if any are against such an importance of holy practice as has been spoken of, it must be only from a senseless aversion to the letters and sound of the word *works*, when there is no reason in the world to be given for it, but what may be given with equal force, why they should have an aversion to the

words *holiness*, *godliness*, *grace*, *religion*, *experience*, and even *faith* itself; for to make a righteousness of any of these, is as legal, and as inconsistent with the way of the new covenant, as to make a righteousness of holy practice.

It is greatly to the hurt of religion, for persons to make light of, and insist little on, those things which the scripture insists most upon, as of most importance in the evidence of our interest in Christ, under a notion that to lay weight on these things is legal, and an old covenant way; and so, to neglect the exercises, and effectual operations of grace in practice, and insist almost wholly on discoveries, and the method and manner of the immanent exercises of conscience and grace in contemplation; depending on an ability to make nice distinctions in these matters, and a faculty of accurate discerning in them, from philosophy or experience. It is in vain to seek for any better, or any further signs than those that the scriptures have most expressly mentioned, and most frequently insisted on, as signs of godliness. They who pretend to a greater accuracy in giving signs, or by their extraordinary experience or insight into the nature of things, to give more distinguishing marks, which shall more thoroughly search out and detect the hypocrite, are but subtil to darken their own minds, and the minds of others; their refinings, and nice discerning, are in God's sight, but refined foolishness and a sagacious delusion. Here are applicable those words of Agur, Prov. xxx. 5, 6. "Every word of God is pure; he is a shield to them that put their trust in him: Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar." Our discerning, with regard to the hearts of men, is not much to be trusted. We can see but a little way into the nature of the soul, and the depths of man's heart. The ways are so many whereby persons' affections may be moved without any supernatural influence, the natural springs of the affections are so various and so secret, so many things have oftentimes a joint influence on the affections, the imagination, and that in ways innumerable and unsearchable, natural temper, education, the common influences of the Spirit of God, a surprising concourse of affecting cir-

cumstances, an extraordinary coincidence of things in the course of men's thoughts, together with the subtil management of invisible malicious spirits, that no philosophy or experience will ever be sufficient to guide us safely through this labyrinth and maze, without our closely following the clue which God has given us in his word. God knows his own reasons why he insists on some things, and plainly sets them forth as the things that we should try ourselves by rather than others. It may be it is because he knows that these things are attended with less perplexity, and that we are less liable to be deceived by them than others. He best knows our nature; and he knows the nature and manner of his own operations; and he best knows the way of our safety; he knows what allowances to make for different states of his church, and different tempers of particular persons, and varieties in the manner of his own operations, how far nature may resemble grace, and how far nature may be mixed with grace, what affections may rise from imagination, and how far imagination may be mixed with spiritual illumination. And therefore it is our wisdom, not to take his work out of his hands, but to follow him, and lay the stress of the judgment of ourselves there, where he has directed us. If we do otherwise, no wonder if we are bewildered, confounded, and fatally deluded. But if we had got into the way of looking chiefly at those things, which Christ and his apostles and prophets chiefly insisted on, and so in judging of ourselves and others, chiefly regarding practical exercises and effects of grace, not neglecting other things; it would be of manifold happy consequence; it would above all things tend to the conviction of deluded hypocrites, and to prevent the delusion of those whose hearts were never brought to a thorough compliance with the strait and narrow way which leads to life; it would tend to deliver us from innumerable perplexities, arising from the various inconsistent schemes there are about methods and steps of experience; it would greatly tend to prevent professors neglecting strictness of life, and tend to promote their engagedness and earnestness in their Christian walk; and it would become fashionable for men to shew

their Christianity, more by an amiable distinguished behavior, than by an abundant and excessive declaring their experiences; and we should get into the way of appearing lively in religion, more by being lively in the service of God and our generation, than by the liveliness and forwardness of our tongues, and making a business of proclaiming on the house tops, with our mouths, the holy and eminent acts and exercises of our own hearts; and Christians that are intimate friends, would talk together of their experiences and comforts, in a manner better becoming Christian humility and modesty, and more to each other's profit; their tongues not running before, but rather going behind their hands and feet, after the prudent example of the blessed apostle, 2 Cor. xii. 6, and many occasions of spiritual pride would be cut off; and so a great door shut against the devil; and a great many of the main stumbling blocks against experimental and powerful religion would be removed; and religion would be declared and manifested in such a way that, instead of hardening spectators, and exceedingly promoting infidelity and atheism, would, above all things, tend to convince men that there is a reality in religion, and greatly awaken them, and win them, by convincing their consciences of the importance and excellency of religion. Thus the light of professors would so shine before men, that others, seeing their good works, would glorify their Father which is in heaven.

OBSERVATIONS

CONCERNING FAITH.

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§ 1. FAITH is a belief of a testimony; 2 Thess. i. 10. "When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day." It is an assent to truth, as appears by the 11th of Hebrews; and it is saving faith that is there spoken of, as appears by the last verses of the foregoing chapter: "And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they, without us, should not be made perfect." Mark i. 15. "Saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: Repent ye, and believe the gospel." John xx. 31. "But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that, believing, ye might have life through his name." 2 Thess. ii. 13. "But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth."

§ 2. It is the proper act of the soul towards God as faithful. Rom. iii. 3, 4. "For what if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: Yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged."

§ 3. It is a belief of truth from a sense of glory and excellency, or at least *with* such a sense. John xx. 29. "Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet

have believed." Matth. ix. 21. "She said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole." 1 Cor. xii. 3. "Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man, speaking by the Spirit of God, calleth Jesus accursed; and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost."

§ 4. It is a belief of the truth, from a spiritual taste and relish of what is excellent and divine. Luke xii. 57. "Yea, and why, even of yourselves, judge ye not what is right?" Believers receive the truth in the love of it, and speak the truth in love. Eph. iv. 15. "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ."

§ 5. The object of faith is the gospel, as well as Jesus Christ. Mark i. 15. "And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: Repent ye, and believe the gospel." John xvii. 8. "For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me." Rom. x. 16, 17. "But they have not obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?....So then, faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

§ 6. Faith includes a knowledge of God and Christ. 2 Pet. i. 2, 3. "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord; according as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue." John xvii. 3. "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."

§ 7. A belief of promises is faith, or a great part of faith. Heb. xi. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," &c. 2 Chron. xx. 20. "And they rose early in the morning, and went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa; and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper." A de-

pending on promises is an act of faith. Gal. v. 5. "For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith."

§ 8. Faith is a receiving of Christ. John i. 12. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."

§ 9. It is receiving Christ into the heart. Rom. x. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. "But the righteousness which is of faith, speaketh on this wise, Say not in thy heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (That is, to bring Christ down from above;) or, who shall descend into the deep? (That is, to bring up Christ from the dead.) But what saith it; The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart, (that is, the word of faith, which we preach) That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

§ 10. A true faith includes more than a mere belief; it is accepting the gospel, and includes all acceptation. 1 Tim. i. 14, 15. "And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." 2 Cor. xi. 4. "For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached; or if you receive another Spirit, which ye have not received; or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him."

§ 11. It is something more than merely the assent of the understanding, because it is called an obeying the gospel. Rom. x. 16. "But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?". 1 Pet. iv. 17. "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: And if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?"

It is obeying the doctrine from the heart; Rom. vi. 17, 18. "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin; but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which

was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness," &c.

§ 12. This expression of obeying the gospel, seems to denote the heart's yielding to the gospel in what it proposes to us in its calls: It is something more than merely what may be called a believing the truth of the gospel. John xii. 42. "Nevertheless, among the chief rulers also, many believed on him; but, because of the Pharisees, they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue." And Philip asked the eunuch, whether he believed with all his heart?.... It is a fully believing, or a being fully persuaded: This passage evidences that it is so much at least.

§ 13. There are different sorts of faith that are not true and saving, as is evident by what the Apostle James says, "Shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works." Where it is supposed that there may be a faith without works, which is not the right faith: When he says, "I will shew thee my faith by my works," nothing else can be meant, than that I will shew thee that my faith is right.

§ 14. It is a trusting in Christ. Psal. ii. 12. "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little: Blessed are all they that put their trust in him." Eph. i. 12, 13. "That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ: In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." 2 Tim. i. 12. "For the which cause I also suffer these things: Nevertheless I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."

Many places in the Old Testament speak of trusting in God as the condition of his favor and salvation; especially Psal. lxxviii. 21, 22. "Therefore the Lord heard this, and was wroth: So a fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger also came up against Israel; because they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation." It implies submission;

Rom. xv. 12. "And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse; and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, in him shall the Gentiles trust." 1 Tim. iv. 10. "For therefore we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe." 2 Tim. i. 12. "For which cause I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." Matth. viii. 26. "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" Matth. xvi. 8. "Which Jesus, when he perceived, he said unto them, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread?" 1 John v. 13, 14. "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life; and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God. And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us." Believing in Christ in one verse, is called confidence in the next.

§ 15. It is a committing ourselves to Christ; 2 Tim. i. 12. "For the which cause I also suffer these things: Nevertheless I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have *committed* unto him against that day." This is a Scripture sense of the word *believe*, as is evident by John ii. 24. "Jesus did not commit himself to them." In the original it is ουκ επιστευεν εαυτον αυτοις.

§ 16. It is a gladly receiving the gospel; Acts ii. 41. "Then they that gladly received his word, were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." It is approving the gospel; Luke vii. 30, 35. "But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him. But wisdom is justified of all her children." It is obeying the doctrine; Rom. vi. 17. "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin; but ye have obeyed from the heart, that form of doctrine which was delivered you." It is what may be well

understood by those expressions of coming to Christ, of looking to him, of opening the door to let him in. This is very evident by scripture. It is a coming and taking the waters of life, eating and drinking Christ's flesh and blood, hearing Christ's voice, and following him. John x. 26, 27. "But ye believe not; because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." John viii. 12. "Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world; he that followeth me, shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." Isaiah xlv. 22. "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: For I am God, and there is none else."

§ 17. Faith consists in two things, viz. in being persuaded of, and in embracing the promises: Heb. xi. 13. "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." 1 Cor. xiii. 7. "Charity believeth all things, hopeth all things." If that faith, hope and charity, spoken of in this verse, be the same with those that are compared together in the last verse, then faith arises from a charitable disposition of heart, or from a principle of divine love. John v. 42. "But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you," with the context. Deut. xiii. 3. "Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: For the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul." 1 John v. 1. "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God: And every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him."

§ 18. It is a being reconciled unto God, revealing himself by Christ in the gospel, or our minds being reconciled. 2 Cor. v. 18, 19, 20, 21. "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ; as

though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Col. i. 21. "And you that were sometimes alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled." It is the according of the whole soul, and not merely of the understanding. Matth. xi. 6. "Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me."

§ 19. There is contained in the nature of faith a sense of our own unworthiness. Matth. xv. 27, 28. "Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith." See concerning the centurion, Luke vii. 6....9; this woman which was a sinner, ib. v. 37, 38, and especially 50; the prodigal son, Luke xv. the penitent thief, Luke xxiii. 41. Consult also Hab. ii. 4. "Behold his soul which is lifted up, is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith. Prov. xxviii. 25,; Psal. xl. 4, and Psal. cxxxi.

§ 20. It is a being drawn to Christ. None can come unto Christ, but whom the Father draws. The freeness of the covenant of grace is represented thus, that the condition of finding is only seeking; and the condition of receiving, asking; and the condition of having the door opened, is knocking. From whence I infer, that faith is a hearty applying unto God by Christ for salvation, or the heart's seeking it of God through him. See also John iv. 10. "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith unto thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." And Luke xxiii. 42; it is calling on Christ; it is the opposite unto disallowing and rejecting Christ Jesus. John xii. 46, 47, 48. "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness. And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not; for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him; the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." 1 Pet. ii.

7. "Unto you therefore which believe, he is precious; but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner."

§ 21. Love either is what faith arises from, or is included in faith, by John iii. 18, 19. "He that believeth not, is condemned already; and this is their condemnation, that men loved darkness rather than light." 2 Thess. ii. 10, 12. "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

§ 22. The being athirst for the waters of life is faith, Rev. xxi. 6. It is a true cordial seeking of salvation by Christ. Believing in Christ is heartily joining ourselves to Christ and to his party, as is said of the followers of Theudas, Acts v. 36. And we are justified freely through faith, i. e. we are saved by Christ only on joining ourselves to him. It is a being persuaded to join ourselves to him, and to be of his party. John viii. 12. "Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: He that followeth me, shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." To believe in Christ, is to hearken to him as a prophet; to yield ourselves subjects to him as a king; and to depend upon him as a priest. Desiring Christ, is an act of faith in Christ, because he is called the desire of all nations; Hagg. ii. 7, that is, he that is to be the desire of all nations, when all nations shall believe in him and subject themselves to him, according to the frequent promises and prophecies of God's word; though there are other things included in the sense, yet this seems to be principally intended. There belongs to faith a sense of the ability and sufficiency of Christ to save, and of his fitness for the work of salvation: Matth. ix. 2, and 28, 29, and 21. Rom. iv. 21. "And being fully persuaded, that what he had promised, he is able to perform." Of his fidelity, Matth. xiv. 30, 31. "But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid: And beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, where-

fore didst thou doubt?" Of his readiness to save, Matth. xv. 22, &c. 2 Tim. i. 5, 12. "Now the end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry." Of his ability, Matth. viii. 2. "And behold, there came a leper, and worshipped him, saying, Lord if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." Matth. viii. 26. "The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof: But speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.

§ 23. It is submitting to the righteousness of God. Rom. x. 3. "For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." It is what may be well represented by flying for refuge, by the type of flying to the city of refuge. Heb. vi. 18. "That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before us." It is a sense of the sufficiency and the reality of Christ's righteousness, and of his power and grace to save. John xvi. 8. "He shall convince the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment." It is a receiving the truth with a love to it. It is receiving the love of the truth. 2 Thess. ii. 10, 12. "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." The heart must close with the new covenant by dependence upon it, and by love and desire. 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. "Although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure. This is all my salvation and all my desire, although he make it not to grow."

§ 24. Upon the whole, the best and clearest, and most perfect definition of justifying faith, and most according to the scripture, that I can think of, is this, faith is the soul's entirely embracing the revelation of Jesus Christ as our Saviour. The

word *embrace* is a metaphorical expression; but I think it much clearer than any proper expression whatsoever: It is called believing; because believing is the first act of the soul in embracing a narration or revelation; and embracing, when conversant about a revelation or thing declared, is more properly called believing, than loving or choosing. If it were conversant about a person only, it would be more properly called *loving*. If it were only conversant about a gift, an inheritance or reward, it would more properly be called receiving or accepting, &c.

The definition might have been expressed in these words, faith is the soul's entirely adhering and acquiescing in the revelation of Jesus Christ as our Saviour....Or thus, faith is the soul's embracing that truth of God, that reveals Jesus Christ as our Saviour....Or thus, faith is the soul's entirely acquiescing in, and depending upon the truth of God, revealing Christ as our Saviour.

It is the whole soul according and assenting to the truth, and embracing of it. There is an entire yielding of the mind and heart to the revelation, and a closing with it, and adhering to it, with the belief, and with the inclination and affection. It is admitting and receiving it with entire credit and respect. The soul receives it as true, as worthy and excellent. It may be more perfectly described than defined by a short definition, by reason of the penury of words; a great many words express it better than one or two. I here use the same metaphorical expressions; but it is because they are much clearer, than any proper expressions that I know of.

It is the soul's entirely acquiescing in this revelation, from a sense of the sufficiency, dignity, glory and excellency of the author of the revelation.

Faith is the whole soul's active agreeing, according and symphonizing with this truth; all opposition in judgment and inclination, so far as he believes, being taken away. It is called believing, because fully believing this revelation, is the first and principal exercise and manifestation of this accordance and agreement of soul.

§ 25. The adhering to the truth, and acquiescing in it with the judgment, is from a sense of the glory of the revealer, and the sufficiency and excellency of the performer of the facts. The adhering to it, and acquiescing in it with the inclination and affection, is from the goodness and excellency of the thing revealed, and of the performer. If a person be pursued by an enemy, and commit himself to a king or a captain, to defend him, it implies his quitting other endeavors, and applying to him for defence, and putting himself under him, and hoping that he will defend him. If we consider it as a mere act of the mind, a transaction between spiritual beings, considered, as abstracted from any external action, then it is the mind's quitting all other endeavors, and seeking and applying itself to the Saviour for salvation, fully choosing salvation by him, and delivering itself to him, or a being willing to be his, with a hope that he will save him. Therefore, for a person to commit himself to Christ as a Saviour, is quitting all other endeavors and hopes, and heartily applying himself to Christ for salvation, fully choosing salvation by him, and acquiescing in his way of salvation, and a hearty consent of the soul to be his entirely, hoping in his sufficiency and willingness to save.

§ 26. The first act cannot be hoping in a promise, that is, as belonging to the essence of the act. For there must be the essence of the act performed, before any promise belongs to the subject. But the essence of the act, as it is exercised in justifying faith, is a quitting other hopes, and applying to him for salvation, choosing, and with the inclination closing with salvation by him in his way, with a sense of his absolute, glorious sufficiency and mercy. Hope in the promises may immediately follow in a moment; but it is impossible that there be a foundation for it, before the essence of faith be performed; though it is the same disposition that leads the soul to lay hold on the promise afterwards. It is impossible that a man should be encouraged by a conditional promise, to trust in Christ, if you mean by trusting in Christ, a depending upon his promises to the person trusting; for that is to suppose a dependence upon the promise antecedent to the first depend-

ence upon it; and that the first time a man depends upon the promise, he is encouraged to do it by a dependence upon the promise. The conditional promise is this, that if you will trust in Christ, you shall be saved: And you suppose the essence of this trust is depending upon this promise; and yet that the soul is encouraged to trust in Christ by a dependence thereupon; which is to say, that the first time the soul depends upon Christ's promises, it is encouraged to do it by a dependence on his promises.

§ 27. Faith is the soul's entirely adhering to, and acquiescing in the revelation of Jesus Christ as our Saviour, from a sense of the excellent dignity and sufficiency of the revealer of the doctrine, and of the Saviour. God is the revealer, and Christ is also the revealer. Christ's excellency and sufficiency include the excellency of his person, and the excellency of the salvation he has revealed, and his adequateness to the performance, &c....and the excellency of his manner of salvation, &c. From the excellency and sufficiency of the revealer and performer, we believe what is said is true, fully believe it; and from the glorious excellency of the Saviour and his salvation, all our inclination closes with the revelation. To depend upon the word of another person, imports two things: First, to be sensible how greatly it concerns us, and how much our interest and happiness really depend upon the truth of it; and, secondly, to depend upon the word of another, is so to believe it, as to dare to act upon it, as if it were really true. I do not say, that I think these words are the only true definition of faith. I have used words that most naturally expressed it, of any I could think of. There might have been other words used, that are much of the same sense.

§ 28. Though hope does not enter into the essential nature of faith, yet it is so essential to it, that it is the natural and necessary, and next immediate fruit of true faith. In the first act of faith, the soul is enlightened with a sense of the merciful nature of God and of Christ, and believes the declarations that are made in God's word of it; and it humbly and heartily applies and seeks to Christ; and it sees such a

congruity between the declared mercy of God, and the disposition he then feels towards him, that he cannot but hope, that that declared mercy will be exercised towards him. Yea, he sees that it would be incongruous, for God to give him such inclination and motions of heart towards Christ as a Saviour, if he were not to be saved by him.

§ 29. Any thing that may be called a receiving the revelation of the gospel is not faith, but such a sort of receiving it, as is suitable to the nature of the gospel, and the respect it has to us. The act of reception suitable to truth, is believing it. The suitable reception of that which is excellent, is choosing it and loving it. The proper act of reception of a revelation of deliverance from evil, and the conferring of happiness, is, acquiescing in it and depending upon it. The proper reception of a Saviour, is, committing ourselves to him and trusting in him. The proper act of reception of the favor of God, is, believing and esteeming it, and rejoicing in it. He that suitably receives forgiveness of his fault, does with a humble sense of his fault rejoice in the pardon.

Thus, for instance, he that reads a truth that no way concerns his interest, if he believes it, it is proper to say he receives it. But if there be a declaration of some glorious and excellent truth, that does nearly concern him, he that only believes it, cannot be said to receive it. And if a captain offers to deliver a distressed people, they that only believe what he says, without committing themselves to him, and putting themselves under him, cannot be said to receive him. So, if a prince offers one his favor, he that does not esteem his favor, cannot be said heartily to accept thereof. Again, if one offended offers pardon to another, he cannot be said to receive it, if he be not sensible of his fault, and does not care for the displeasure of the offended.

The whole act of reception suitable to the nature of the gospel, and its relation to us, and our circumstances with respect to it, is best expressed, (if it be expressed in one word by the word πιστις or *fides*.

He that offers any of these things mentioned, and offers them only for these proper acts of reception, may be said to offer them freely, nay, perfectly so.

§ 30. For a man to trust in his own righteousness, is to hope that God's anger will be appeased or abated, or that he will be inclined to accept him into favor, upon the sight of some excellency that belongs to him; or to have such a view of things, that it should appear no other than a suitable and right thing for God's anger to be abated, and for him to be inclined to take him into favor, upon the sight of, or out of respect to some excellency belonging to him.

§ 31. The word πίστις, *faith*, seems to be the most proper word to express the cordial reception of Christ and of the truth, for these reasons. First, this revelation is of things spiritual, unseen, strange, and wonderful, exceedingly remote from all the objects of sense, and those things which we commonly converse with in this world, and also exceedingly alien from our fallen nature; so that it is the first and principal manifestation of the symphony between the soul and these divine things, that it believes them, and acquiesces in them as true. And, secondly, the Lord Jesus Christ, in the gospel, appears principally under the character of a Saviour, and not so much of a person absolutely excellent; and therefore, the proper act of reception of him, consists principally in the exercise of a sense of our need of him, and of his sufficiency, his ability, his mercy and love, his faithfulness, the sufficiency of his method of salvation, the sufficiency and completeness of the salvation itself, of the deliverance and of the happiness, and an answerable application of the soul to him for salvation; which can be expressed so well by no other word but faith, or affiance, or confidence, or trust, and others of the same signification; of which, πίστις or faith, is much the best, the most significant; because the rest, in their common significations imply something, that is not of the absolute essence of faith. Thirdly, we have these things exhibited to us, to be received by us, only by a divine testimony. We have nothing else to hold them forth to us.

§ 32. Justifying faith is the soul's sense and conviction of the reality and sufficiency of Jesus Christ as a Saviour, implying a cordial inclination of soul to him as a Saviour. It is the soul's conviction and acknowledgment of God's power in

the difficult things, of his mercy in the wonderful things, of his truth in the mysterious and unseen things, of the excellency of other holy things, of the salvation of Christ Jesus. Faith prepares the way for the removal of guilt of conscience. Guilt of conscience is the sense of the connexion between the sin of the subject and punishment; 1st, by God's law; and 2d, by God's nature and the propriety of the thing. The mind is under the weight of guilt, as long as it has a sense of its being bound to punishment, according to the reason and nature of things, and the requirements of the divine government.

Faith prepares the way for the removal of this. Therefore there must be in faith, 1. A belief that the law is answered and satisfied by Jesus Christ; and 2. Such a sense of the way of salvation by Christ, that it shall appear proper, and be dutiful, and according to the reason of things, that sin should not be punished in us, but that we nevertheless should be accepted through Christ. When the mind sees a way that this can be done, and there is nothing in the law, nor in the divine nature, nor nature of things to hinder it; that of itself lightens the burden, and creates hope. It causes the mind to see that it is not for ever bound by the reason of things to suffer; though the mind does not know that it has performed the condition of pardon. This is to have a sense of the sufficiency of this way of salvation. When a man commits sin and is sensible of it, his soul has a natural sense of the propriety of punishment in such a case, a sense that punishment, according to the reason of things, belongs to him; for the same reasons as all nations have a sense of the propriety of punishing men for crimes.

The blood of bulls, and goats, and calves, could never make them that offered them perfect as to the conscience, because the mind never could have a sense of the propriety and beauty, and fitness in reason, of being delivered from punishment upon their account. This kind of sense of the sufficiency of Christ's mediation, depends upon a sense of the gloriousness and excellency of gospel things in general; as, the greatness of God's mercy; the greatness of Christ's excel-

lency and dignity, and dearness to the Father; the greatness of Christ's love to sinners, &c. That easiness of mind which persons often have, before they have comfort from a sense of their being converted, arises from a sense they have of God's sovereignty. They see nothing either in the nature of God, or of things, that will necessarily bind them to punishment; but that God may damn them, if he pleases; and may save them, if he pleases. When persons are brought to that, then they are fit to be comforted; then their comfort is like to have a true and immoveable foundation, when their dependence is no way upon themselves, but wholly upon God. In order to such a sense of the sufficiency of this way of salvation, it must be seen, that God has no disposition, and no need to punish us. The sinner, when he considers how he has affronted and provoked God, looks upon it, that the case is such, and the affront is such, that there is need, in order that the majesty, and honor and authority of God may be vindicated, that he should be punished, and that God's nature is such, that he must be disposed to punish him.

COROLL. Hence we learn, that our experience of the sufficiency of the doctrine of the gospel, to give peace of conscience, is a rational inward witness to the truth of the gospel. When the mind sees such a fitness in this way of salvation, that it takes off the burthen, that arises from the sense of its being necessarily bound to punishment, through proper desert, and from the demands of reason and nature; it is a strong argument, that it is not a thing of mere human imagination. When we experience its fitness to answer its end, this is the third of the three that bear witness on earth. The Spirit bears witness, by discovering the divine glory, and those stamps of divinity that are in the gospel. The water bears witness; that is, the experience of the power of the gospel to purify and sanctify the heart, witnesses the truth of it; and the blood bears witness by delivering the conscience from guilt. Any other sort of faith than this sense of the sufficiency of Christ's salvation, does not give such immediate glory and honor to Christ, and does not so necessarily and immediately infer the necessity of Christ's being known. Nothing besides makes all Christianity so to hang upon an actual respect

to Christ, and centre in him. Surely, the more the sinner has an inward, an immediate and sole and explicit dependence upon Christ, the more Christ has the glory of his salvation from him.

In order to this sort of sense of the congruity of our sins being forgiven, and of punishment's being removed, by the satisfaction of Christ, there must of necessity be a sense of our guiltiness. For it is impossible any congruity should be seen, without comparison of the satisfaction with the guilt. And they cannot be compared, except there be a sense of them both. There must not only be such a sense of God's being very angry, and his anger being very dreadful, without any sense of the reasonableness of that anger; but there must be a proper sense of the desert of wrath, such as there is in repentance. Indeed it is possible there may be such a sense of the glory of the Saviour and his salvation, that if we had more of a sense of guilt than we have, we should see a congruity.

§ 33. Sinners, under conviction of their guilt, are generally afraid that God is so angry with them, that he never will give them faith in Christ. They think the majesty and jealousy of God will not allow of it. Therefore, there goes with a sense of the sufficiency of Christ, a sense of God's sovereignty with respect to mercy and judgment, that he will and may have mercy in Christ, on whom he will have mercy, and leave to hardness whom he will. This eases of that burden.

§ 34. For a man to trust in his own righteousness, is to conceive hopes of some favor of God, or some freedom from his displeasure, from a false notion of his own goodness or excellency, and the proportion it bears to that favor; and of his own badness, and the relation it bears to his displeasure. It is to conceive hopes of some favor of God, from a false notion of the relation which our own goodness or excellency bears to that favor; whether this mistaken relation be supposed to imply an obligation in natural justice, or propriety and decency, or an obligation in point of wisdom and honor; or if he thinks that, without it, God will not do excellently or

according to some one at least of his declared attributes, or whether it be any obligation by virtue of his promise; whether this favorable respect be the pardon of sin, or the bestowment of heaven, or the abating of punishment, or answering of prayers, or mitigation of punishment, or converting grace, or God's delighting in us, prizing of us, or the bestowing of any temporal or spiritual blessing. This excellency we speak of, is either real or supposed; either negative, in not being so bad as others, and the like, or positive. Whether it be natural or moral excellency, is immaterial: Also, whether the sinner himself looks upon it as an excellency, or supposes God looks upon it as such. For men to trust in their own righteousness, is to entertain hope of escaping any displeasure, or obtaining any positive favor from God, from too high a notion of our own moral excellency, or too light a notion of our badness, as compared with or related to that favor or displeasure.

§ 35. This is to be observed concerning the scriptures that I have cited respecting faith, that they sometimes affix salvation to the natural and immediate effects of faith, as well as to faith itself. Such as, asking, knocking, &c. Rom. x. 12, 13, 14. In the 14th verse, faith is distinguished from calling upon him.

§ 36. All trusting to our own righteousness indeed, is expecting justification for our own excellency. But they that expect that God will convert them for their excellency, or do any thing else towards their salvation upon that account, do trust in their own righteousness. Because, the supposing that God will be the more inclined to convert a man, or enable him to come to Christ for his excellency, is to suppose, that he is justified already, at least in part. It supposes, that God's anger for sin is at least partly appeased, and that God is more favorably inclined to him for his excellency's sake, in that he is disposed to give him converting grace, or do something else towards his conversion upon that account.

§ 37. The difficulty in giving a definition of faith is, that we have no word that clearly and adequately expresses the whole act of acceptance, or closing of the soul or heart with

Christ. Inclination expresses it but partially; conviction expresses it also but in part; the sense of the soul does not do it fully. And if we use metaphorical expressions, such as embrace, and love, &c. they are obscure, and will not carry the same idea with them to the minds of all. All words that are used to express such acts of the mind, are of a very indeterminate signification. It is a difficult thing to find words to exhibit our own ideas. Another difficulty is to find a word, that shall clearly express the whole goodness or righteousness of the Saviour and of the gospel. To be true, is one part of the goodness of the gospel. For the Saviour to be sufficient, is one part of his goodness. To be suitable, is another part. To be bountiful and glorious, is another part. To be necessary, is another part. The idea of a real good or lovely object, that is conceived to be real, possesses the heart after another manner, than a very lovely idea that is only imaginary. So that there is need of both a sense of goodness and reality, to unite the heart to the Saviour.

Faith is the soul's embracing and acquiescing in the revelation which the word of God gives us of Jesus Christ as our Saviour, in a sense and conviction of his goodness and reality as such. I do not consider the sense of the goodness and reality of Christ as a Saviour, as a distinct thing from the embracing of him, but only explain the nature of the embracing by it. But it is implied in it; it is the first and principal thing in it. And all that belongs to embracing the revelation, an approbation of it, a love to it, adherence to it, acquiescence in it, is in a manner implied in a sense of Christ's goodness and reality and relation to us, or our concern in him. I say, as our Saviour; for there is implied in believing in Christ, not only and merely that exercise of mind, which arises from a sense of his excellency and reality as a Saviour; but also that which arises from the consideration of his relation to us, and of our concern in him, his being a Saviour for such as we are; for sinful men; and a Saviour that is offered with his benefits to us. The angels have a sense of the reality and goodness of Christ as a Saviour, and may be said with joy to embrace the discovery of it. They cannot be said to believe

in Christ. The spirit that they receive, the notice that they have of Christ the Saviour is the same; but there is a difference in the act, by reason of the different relation that Christ, as a Saviour, stands in to us, from what he doth to them.

§ 38. Objection 1. It may be be objected, that this seems to make the revelation more the object of the essential act of faith than Christ. I answer, no; for the revelation is no otherwise the object by this definition, than as it brings and exhibits Christ to us. It is embracing the revelation in a sense and conviction of the goodness and reality of the Saviour it exhibits. We do not embrace Christ by faith any otherwise, than as brought to us in a revelation: When we come to embrace him as exhibited otherwise, that will not be faith. A man is saved by that faith, which is a reception of Christ in all his offices; but he is justified by his receiving Christ in his priestly office.

§ 39. To believe, is to have a sense and a realizing belief of what the gospel reveals of the mediation of Christ, and particularly as it concerns ourselves. There is in faith a conviction, that redemption by that mediation of Christ which the gospel reveals, exists, and a sense how it does so, and how it may with respect to us in particular. There is a trusting to Christ that belongs to the essence of true faith. That quiet and ease of mind that arises from a sense of the sufficiency of Christ, may well be called a trusting in that sufficiency. It gives a quietness to the mind, to see that there is a way wherein it may be saved, to see a good and sufficient way, wherein its salvation is very possible, and the attributes of God cannot be opposite to it. This gives ease, though it be not yet certain that he shall be saved. But to believe Christ's sufficiency, so as to be thus far easy, may be called a trusting in Christ, though it cannot be trusting in him that he will save us. To be easy in any degree, on a belief or persuasion of the sufficiency of any thing for our good, is a degree of trusting. There is in faith not only a belief of what the gospel declares, that Christ has satisfied for our sins, and merited eternal life; but there is also a sense of it; a sense that Christ's sufferings do satisfy, and that he did merit, or was worthy that we should

be accepted for his sake. There is a difference between being convinced that it is so, and having a sense that it is so. There is in the essence of justifying faith, included a receiving of Christ as a Saviour from sin. For we embrace him as the author of life, as well as Saviour from misery. But the sum of that eternal life which Christ purchased is holiness; it is a holy happiness. And there is in faith a liking of the happiness that Christ has procured and offers. The Jews despising the pleasant land, is mentioned as part of their unbelief. It must be as the gospel reveals Christ, or in the gospel notion of him, the soul must close with Christ. For whosoever is offended in Christ, in the view that the gospel gives us of him, cannot be said to believe in him; for he is one that is excluded from blessedness, by that saying of Christ, Matth. xi. 6. "Blessed is he whosoever is not offended in me."

§ 40. There is implied in faith, not only a believing of Christ to be a real, sufficient, and excellent Saviour for me, and having a complacency in him as such; but in a complete act of faith, there is an act of the soul in this view of him, and disposition towards him, seeking to him, that he would be my Saviour; as is evident, because otherwise prayer would not be the expression of faith. But prayer is only the voice of faith to God through Christ: And this is further evident, as faith is expressed by a coming to Christ, and a looking to him to be saved.

§ 41. There is hope implied in the essence of justifying faith. Thus there is hope, that I may obtain justification by Christ, though there is not contained in its essence a hope that I have obtained it. And so there is a trust in Christ contained in the essence of faith. There is a trust implied in seeking to Christ to be my Saviour, in an apprehension that he is a sufficient Saviour; though not a trust in him, as one that has promised to save me, as having already performed the condition of the promise. If a city was besieged and distressed by a potent enemy, and should hear of some great champion at a distance, and should be induced by what they hear of his valor and goodness, to seek and send to him for relief, believing what they have heard of his sufficiency, and

thence conceiving hope that they may be delivered; the people, in sending, may be said to trust in such a champion; as of old the children of Israel, when they sent into Egypt for help, were said to trust in Egypt. It has by many been said, that the soul's immediately applying Christ to itself as its Saviour, was essential to faith; and so that one should believe him to be his Saviour. Doubtless, an immediate application is necessary. But that which is essential, is not the soul's immediately applying Christ to itself so properly, as its applying itself to Christ.

§ 42. Good works are in some sort implied in the very nature of faith, as is implied in 1 Tim. v. 8, where the apostle, speaking of them that do not provide for their parents, says, "If any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith."

§ 43. Faith is that inward sense and act, of which prayer is the expression; as is evident, 1. Because in the same manner as the freedom of grace, according to the gospel covenant, is often set forth by this, that he that believes, receives; *so it* also oftentimes is by this, that he that asks, or *prays, or calls* upon God, receives; Matth. vii. 7, 8, 9, 10; Luke xi. 9. "Ask and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. And all things whatsoever ye shall *ask in prayer, believing*, ye shall receive." Mark xi. 23, 24. To the same purpose with that last mentioned place in Matthew. John xv. 7. "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you." Psalm cxlv. 18. "The Lord is nigh unto all that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth." Joel ii. 32. The prophet, speaking there of gospel times, says, "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered; for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call." Rom. x. 12, 13. "For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: For the same Lord over all, is rich unto all that call upon

him. For whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved;" quoting the forementioned place in Joel.

2. The same expressions that are used in scripture for faith, may be well used for prayer also; such as coming to God or Christ, and looking to him. Eph. iii. 12. "In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him."

3. Prayer is often plainly spoken of as the expression of faith. As it very certainly is in Rom. x. 11, 12, 13, 14. "For the scripture saith, whosoever believeth on him, shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: For the same Lord over all, is rich unto all that call upon him; for whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?" Christian prayer is called the prayer of faith, James v. 15. And believing is often mentioned as the life and soul of true prayer, as in the forementioned place. Matth. xxi. 21, 22. 1 Tim. ii. 8. "I will that men every where lift up holy hands, without wrath and doubting." And Heb. x. 19, 22. "Draw near in full assurance of faith." James i. 5, 6. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask it of God, that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering."

Faith in God, is expressed in praying to God. Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, is expressed in praying to Christ, and praying in the name of Christ; John xiv. 13, 14. And the promises are made to asking in Christ's name, in the same manner as they are to believing in Christ. John xiv. 13, 14. "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it." Chap. xvi. 23, 24. "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto you have asked nothing in my name: Ask, and receive, that your joy may be full."

§ 44. Trusting in Christ, is implied in the nature of faith; as is evident by Rom. ix. 33. "As it is written, Behold, I

lay in Sion a stumbling stone, and rock of offence; and whosoever believeth on him, shall not be ashamed." The apostle there in the context is speaking of justifying faith; and it is evident, that trusting in Christ is implied in the import of the word *believeth*. For being ashamed, as the word is used in Scripture, is the passion that arises upon the frustration of truth or confidence. There is implied in justifying faith, a trusting to Christ's truth and faithfulness, or a believing what he declares and promises; as is evident, in that it is called not only believing in Christ, and believing on Christ, but believing Christ; John iii. 36. "He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life." Trusting in Christ is often implied in faith, according to the representations of Scripture; Isa. xxvii. 5. "Or let him take hold of my strength that he may make peace with me, and he shall make peace with me."

§ 45. Why is this reception or unition of the soul properly expressed by faith? *Answer*, Not so much, merely from the nature of the act, more abstractedly considered, which is unition, reception, or closing; but from the nature of the act, conjunctly with the state of the agent and the object of the act, which qualifies and specifies the act, and adds certain qualifications to the abstract idea of unition, closing, or reception. Consider the state of the receiver; guilty, miserable, undone, impotent, helpless, unworthy; and the nature and worth of the received, he being a divine, invisible Saviour: The end for which he is received, the benefits invisible: The ground on which he is received or closed with, the word of God, and his invitations and promises: The circumstances of those things that are received, supernatural, incomprehensible, wonderful, difficult, unsearchable: The proper act of unition or reception in such a case, is most aptly expressed by the word *faith*. Fearfulness is opposite to faith, Mark iv. 40. "Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith?" And Rev. xxi. 8. "But the fearful and the unbelieving." Justifying faith is sometimes called hope in Scripture.

§ 46. The condition both of the first and second covenant, is a receiving, compliance with, or yielding to, a signification or declaration from God; or to a revelation made from God.

A receiving or yielding to a signification of the will of God, as our sovereign Lord and lawgiver, is most properly called obedience. The receiving and yielding to a strange mysterious revelation and offer which God makes of mercy to sinners, being a revelation of things spiritual, supernatural, invisible, and mysterious, through an infinite power, wisdom and grace of God, is properly called *faith*. There is indeed obedience in the condition of both covenants, and there is faith or believing God in both. But the different name arises from the remarkably different nature of the revelation or manifestations made. The one is a law; the other a testimony and offer. The one is a signification of what God expects that we should do towards him, and what he expects to receive from us; the other a revelation of what he has done for us, and an offer of what we may receive from him. The one is an expression of God's great authority over us, in order to a yielding to the authority; the other is a revelation of God's mysterious and wonderful mercy, and wisdom, and power for us, in order to a reception answerable to such a revelation.

The reason why this was not so fully insisted upon under the Old Testament, under the denomination of faith, was, that the revelation itself of this great salvation, was not thus explicitly and fully made.

It must most naturally be called faith, 1. Because the word that is the object of it, is a revelation, which most nearly concerns our interest and good; and that a revelation not of a work to be done by us, but an offer made to us only to be received by us.

If it were a manifestation otherwise than by testimony, a receiving of it, and yielding to it, would not so naturally be called faith; and if a mere manifestation of something not nearly concerning us, it would not naturally be called faith. For idle stories, that do not concern us, are not the object of trust or dependence. If it were a manifestation in order to something expected from us; some work to be done by us; a yielding to it would not so properly be called faith. For yielding, then, would imply something more than just receiving the testimony.

2. Because the person that is the object of it, is revealed in the character of a wonderful Saviour. A receiving of a person in the character of a Saviour, is a proper act of trust and affiance. And a receiving a divine invisible Saviour, that offers to save us by infinite power, wisdom, and mercy, and by very mysterious supernatural works, is properly faith.

3. The benefits that are revealed, which are the objects of faith, are things spiritual, invisible, wonderful and future; and therefore, embracing and depending on these, is properly faith.

§ 47. Faith implies a cleaving to Christ, so as to be disposed to sell and suffer all for him. See John xii. 42, 43. "Nevertheless, among the chief rulers also, many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." John v. 44. "How can ye believe, which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only?"

§ 48. Faith is not all kind of assent to the word of God as true and divine. For so the Jews in Christ's time assented to the books of Moses, and therefore Christ tells them, that they trusted in Moses; John v. 45. "There is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust." Yet the very thing that Moses accuses them for, was not believing in him, i. e. believing so as to yield to his sayings, and comply with him, or obey him, as the phrase in the New Testament is concerning Christ. And therefore Christ says in the next verse, "For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me." There may be a strong belief of divine things in the understanding, and yet no saving faith; as is manifest by 1 Cor. xiii. 2. "Though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have no charity, I am nothing." Not only trusting in Christ, as one that has undertaken to save us, and as believing that he is our Saviour, is faith; but applying to him, or seeking to him, that he would become our Saviour, with a sense of his reality and goodness as a Saviour, is faith; as is evident by Rom. xv. 12. "In him shall the Gentiles trust." Compared with the place whence

it is cited, Heb. xi. 10. "To it shall the Gentiles seek;" together with Psalm ix. 10. "And they that know thy name, will put their trust in thee: For thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee." Which agrees well with faith's being called a looking to Christ, or coming to him for life, a flying for refuge to him, or flying to him for safety. And this is the first act of saving faith. And prayer's being the expression of faith, confirms this. This is further confirmed by Isaiah xxxi. 2. "Wo to them that go down to Egypt for help, and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong: But they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither *seek* the Lord." When it is said, "Psalm lxix. 6. "Let not them that wait on thee, O Lord, be ashamed for my sake: Let not those that seek thee be confounded for my sake." It is equivalent to that scripture, "He that believeth shall never be confounded." And when it is said, verse 32. "And your heart shall live that seek the Lord;" it is equivalent to that scripture, "The just shall live by faith." So Psalm xxii. 26. and Psalm lxx. 4. And so Amos v. 4. "For thus saith the Lord unto the house of Israel, Seek ye me, and ye shall live." And verse 6. "Seek the Lord, and ye shall live." And verse 8. "Seek him that made the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning." Cant. iv. 8. "Look from the top of Amana." Isaiah xvii. 7, 8. "At that day shall a man look to his Maker, and his eyes shall have respect to the Holy One of Israel, and he shall not look to the altars, the work of his hands; neither shall respect that which his fingers have made, either the groves or the images." Isaiah lxv. 22. "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." Jonah ii. 4. "I will look again towards thine holy temple." Micah vii. 7. "Therefore I will look unto the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation: My God will hear me." Psalm xxxiv. 5. "They looked unto him, and were lightened; their faces were not ashamed."

§ 49. Faith is a taking hold of God's strength; Isaiah xxvii. 5. "O let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me, and he shall make peace with me."

Faith is expressed by stretching out the hand to Christ; Psal. lxviii. 31. "Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands to God." So Christ said to the man that had the withered hand, "Stretch forth thine hand." Promises of mercy and help are often in Scripture made to rolling our burden, and rolling ourselves, or rolling our way on the Lord. Prov. xvi. 3. "Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established." Psal. xxii. 8, and xxxvii. 5. "He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him: Let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him...." Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass."

§ 50. That there are different sorts of faith, and that all believing that Christ is the Son of God, and Saviour of the world, &c. is not true and saving faith, or that faith which most commonly has the name of faith appropriated to it in the New Testament, is exceedingly evident by John vi. 64. "But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning, who they were that believed not, and who should betray him." Here all false disciples, that had but a temporary faith, that thought him to be the Messiah, but would fall away, as Judas and others, are said to be those that believed not, making an essential difference between their belief, and that grace that has the term faith, or believing, appropriated to it. Faith is a receiving of Christ into the heart, in such a sense as to believe that he is what he declares himself to be, and to have such an high esteem of him as an excellent Lord and Saviour, and so to prize him, and so to depend upon him, as not to be ashamed nor afraid to profess him, and openly and constantly to appear on his side. See Rom. x. 8....13.

§ 51. Trusting in riches, as Christ uses the expression concerning the rich young man, and as the expression is used elsewhere, is an extensive expression, comprehending many dispositions, affections, and exercises of heart towards riches; so faith in Christ, or trusting in Christ, is as extensive. The soul's active closing or uniting with Christ, is faith. But the act of the soul, in its uniting or closing, must be agreeable to

the kind and nature of the union that is to be established between Christ and the saints, and that subsists between them, and is the foundation of the saints communion with Christ. Such is the nature of it, that it is not merely like the various parts of a building, that are cemented and cleave fast together; or as marbles and precious stones may be joined, so as to become one: But it is such a kind of union as subsists between the head and living members, between stock and branches; between which, and the head or stock, there is such a kind of union, that there is an entire, immediate, perpetual dependence for, and derivation of, nourishment, refreshment, beauty, fruitfulness, and all supplies; yea, life and being. And the union is wholly for this purpose; this derivation is the end of it; and it is the most essential thing in the union. Now, such an union as this, when turned into act, (if I may so say) or an active union of an intelligent rational being, that is agreeable to this kind of union, and is a recognition and expression, and as it were the active band of it, is something else besides mere love. It is an act most properly expressed by the name of faith, according to the proper meaning of the word so translated, as it was used in the days when the Scriptures were written.

§ 52. Trusting in a prince or ruler, as the phrase was understood among the Jews, implied in it faithful adherence and entire subjection, submission and obedience. So much the phrase plainly implies; Judges ix. 15. "And the bramble said unto the trees, If in truth ye anoint me king over you, then come and put your trust in my shadow; and, if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon." We have an account of the fulfilment of this parable in the sequel....How the men of Shechem did not prove faithful subjects to Abimelech, according to their covenant or agreement with him, but dealt treacherously with him: Verse 23. And how accordingly Abimelech proved the occasion of their destruction. The like figure of speech is used to signify the nation's obedience to the king of Assyria, Ezek. xxxi. 6. "All the fowls of heaven made their nests in his boughs, and under his branches did all the

beasts of the field bring forth their young, and under his shadow dwelt all great nations." So also it signifies the subjection of the nations to Nebuchadnezzer; Dan. iv. 11, 12. "The tree grew, and was strong: The beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh fed of it." The benefit that those who are the true subjects of Christ have by him, is expressed by the very same things; Ezek. xvii. 23. "In the mountain of the height of Israel will I plant it: And it shall bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a goodly cedar; and under it shall dwell all fowl of every wing; in the shadow of the branches thereof shall they dwell." Our trusting in God and Christ, is often expressed by our trusting in his shadow, and under the shadow of his wings, and the like; Psal. xvii. 8, and xxxvi. 7, and lvii. 1, and lxiii. 7, and xci. 1, Cant. ii. 3, Isaiah iv. 6, and xxv. 4. Here see Ruth ii. 12, compared with chap. i. 16, John iii. 36. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: he that believeth not the Son απειθων." The force of the word may in some measure be learned from Acts v. 36, 37, and Acts v. 40. "And to him they agreed or *obeyed*;" the word is the same in the Greek. And Acts xxiii. 21. "But do not thou *yield* unto them;" the word is the same in the Greek. Acts xxvi. 19. "I was not disobedient (απειθης) to the heavenly vision;" Rom. xxvi. 19. "Disobedient to parents, απειθεις." See also Acts xvii. 4. "Some of them believed (in the Greek επεισθησαν) and consorted with Paul and Silas." Acts xiv. 2. "The unbelieving Jews, απειθουντες." Eph. ii. 2. "The spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience, απειθειας." We may judge something of the force of the word πειθομαι, by the signification of the word whence it comes; πειθομαι is the passive of πειθω, which signifies, to counsel, to move or entice, draw or persuade unto.

§ 53. That a saving belief of truth arises from love, or a holy disposition and relish of heart, appears by Phil. i. 9, 10. "And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment, that ye may approve things that are excellent." That this approving of

the things that are excellent, is mentioned as an instance of the exercise of that knowledge and judgment that is spoken of as the fruit of love, appears more plainly in the original, as the connexion is evident, εις το δοκιμαζειν, unto the approving. The same thing appears by 2 Thess. ii. 12. "That they all might be damned, who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

§ 54. It is fit that, seeing we depend so entirely and universally, visibly and remarkably, on God, in our fallen state, for happiness, and seeing the special design of God was to bring us into such a great and most evident dependence; that the act of the soul, by which it is interested in this benefit, bestowed in this way, should correspond; viz. a looking and seeking to, and depending on God for it; that the unition of heart, that is the proper term, should imply such an application of the soul to God, and seeking his benefits only and entirely, and with full sense of dependence on him, that as the condition before was obedience, or rendering to God, so now it should be seeking and looking to him, drawing and deriving from him, and with the whole heart depending on him, on his power and free grace, &c. Faith is the proper active union of the soul with Christ as our Saviour, as revealed to us in the gospel. But the proper active union of the soul with Christ as our Saviour, as revealed to us in the gospel, is the soul's active agreeing, and suiting or adapting itself in its act, to the exhibition God gives us of Christ and his redemption; to the nature of the exhibition, being pure revelation, and a revelation of things perfectly above our senses and reason; and to Christ himself in his person as revealed, and in the character under which he is revealed to us; and to our state with regard to him in that character; and to our need of him, and concern with him, and his relation to us, and to the benefits to us, with which he is exhibited and offered to us in that revelation; and to the great design of God in that method and divine contrivance of salvation revealed. But the most proper name for such an active union or unition of the soul to Christ, as this, of any that language affords, is *faith*.

§ 55. The revelation or exhibition that God first made of himself, was of his authority, demanding and requiring of us, that we should render something to him that nature and reason required. The act of the soul that is suitable to such an exhibition, may be expressed by submitting, doing, obeying, and rendering to God. The exhibition which God makes of himself, since our fall, in the gospel, is not of his power and authority, as demanding of us, but of his sufficiency for us, as needy, empty, helpless; and of his grace and mercy to us, as unworthy and miserable. And the exhibition is by pure revelation of things quite above all our senses and reason, or the reach of any created faculties, being of the mere good pleasure of God. The act in us, that is proper and suitable to, and well according to such an exhibition as this, may be expressed by such names as believing, seeking, looking, depending, acquiescing, or in one word, *faith*.

§ 56. That believing, in the New Testament, is much the same as trusting, in the Old, is confirmed by comparing Jer. xvii. 5. "Cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord;" ver. 7. "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, whose hope the Lord is,"....with Heb. iii. 12. "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." It also is confirmed by this, that trusting in God, and hoping in him, are used in the Old Testament as expressions of the same import. So hope is often in the New Testament used to signify the same thing that, in other places, is signified by faith. Rom. xv. 12, 13. "And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, in him shall the Gentiles trust."...."Now the God of peace fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost." Compare Dan. iii. 38, with Dan. vi. 23, and Heb. xi. 33, 34.

It is manifest, that trusting in God is a phrase of the same import with believing in him, by comparing Isaiah xlix. 23. "They shall not be ashamed that wait for me;" with Isaiah xxviii. 16, and Rom. ix. 33, and x. 11; 1 Pet.

vi. 6, 7, 8. These places shew, that waiting for God, signifies the same as believing on him. And it is evident, by various passages of Scripture, that waiting on God, or for God, signifies the same as trusting in him.

§ 57. That saving faith implies in its nature divine love, is manifest by 1 John v. 1. "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God; and every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him." The apostle's design in this verse seems to be, to shew the connexion there is between a true and sincere respect to God, and a respect to and union with Christ; so that he who is united to the Son, is so to the Father, and *vice versa*. As he believes in Christ, and so loves him, it is evident that he is a child of God, and *vice versa*. He, whose heart is united to the Father, is so to the Son too. He that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him. (Compare chap. ii. 22, 23, 24, and chap. iv. 15, with John xiv. 1, and John xv. 23, 24.) The same is further manifest again by the following verses of this chapter, 3, 4, 5. "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous;" i. e. this is a good evidence that we have true love to God, that we are enabled to triumph over the difficulties we meet with in this evil world, and not to esteem the yoke of denial of our worldly lusts a grievous and heavy yoke, and on that account be unwilling to take it upon us. "For whosoever is born of God, overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." This is explaining what he had said before, that our love to God enables us to overcome the difficulties that attend keeping God's commands; which shews that love is the main thing in saving faith, the life and power of it, by which it produces great effects; agreeably to what the Apostle Paul says, when he calls saving faith, *faith effectual by love*."

§ 58. Seeking God is from time to time spoken of as the condition of God's favor and salvation, in like manner as trusting in him; Psal. xxiv. 5, 6. "He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his

salvation. This is the generation of them that seek him; that seek thy face, O Jacob." 1 Chron. xvi. 10. "Glory ye in his holy name. Let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord." See the same words in Psal. cv. 3. Psal. xxii. 26. "The meek shall eat and be satisfied. They shall praise the Lord, that seek him. Your heart shall live for ever." Psal. xxxiv. 10. "The young lions do lack and suffer hunger; but they that seek the Lord, shall not want any good thing."

They that seek God, are spoken of as those that love God's salvation. Psal. lxx. 4. "Let all those that seek thee, rejoice and be glad in thee; and let such as love thy salvation, say continually, Let the Lord be magnified." We have the same words again, Psal. xl. 16. The expression seems to be in some measure parallel with trusting in God's salvation; Psal. lxxviii. 22. "Because they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation." And hoping in God's salvation, Psal. cxix. 166. "I have hoped for thy salvation." And waiting for God's salvation, Gen. xlix. 18. "I have waited for thy salvation, O God." Lam. iii. 25, 26. "The Lord is good unto them that wait for him; to the soul that seeketh him. It is good that a man should both hope, and quietly wait for, the salvation of the Lord." Mic. vii. 7. "I will wait for the God of my salvation." Agreeably to this, despising the pleasant land, is spoken of as an exercise of the spirit of unbelief; Psal. cxvi. 24. "Yea, they despised the pleasant land: They believed not his word."

§ 59. Flying, resorting or running to, as to a refuge, are terms used as being equivalent to trusting; Psal. lxii. 7, 8. "My refuge is in God. Trust in him at all times. God is a refuge for us." Psal. xci. 2. Prov. xviii. 10. "The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." Psal. lxxi. 1, 3. "In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust."...."Be thou my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort. Thou hast given commandment to save me; for thou art my rock and my fortress." Heb. vi. 18. "Who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us."

§ 60. Waiting on the Lord, waiting for his salvation, and the like, are terms used as being equivalent to trusting in God in the Scripture. Psal. xxv. 2. "O my God, I trust in thee; let me not be ashamed." Verse 5. "On thee do I wait all the day." Verse 21. "Let integrity and uprightness preserve me, for on thee do I wait." Psal. xxxvii. 3. "Trust in the Lord." Ver. 5. "Trust also in him." Verse 7. "Rest on the Lord, and wait patiently for him." Psal. xxvii. 13, 14. "I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait on the Lord, and be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: Wait, I say, on the Lord."

§ 61. Hoping in God, hoping in his mercy, &c. are used as terms equivalent to trusting in God. Psal. lxxviii. 7. That they might set their hope in God." Psal. cxlvi. 5. "Happy is that man that hath the God of Jacob for his aid; whose hope is in the Lord his God" Jer. xiv. 8. "O the hope of Israel, and the Saviour thereof in time of trouble." Jer. xvii. 7. "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord; whose hope the Lord is." Verse 13. "O Lord, the hope of Israel, all that forsake thee, shall be ashamed." Verse 17. "Thou art my hope in the day of evil." 1 Pet. i. 3, 4, 5, &c. "Hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Christ from the dead; to an inheritance incorruptible, &c. who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, wherein ye greatly rejoice; that the trial of your faith being much more precious....whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice, &c. receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." Verse 13. "Be ye sober, and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;" verse 21, 22. "Who by him do believe in God, who raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God: Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit." Chap. iii. 15. "And be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you." Heb. xi. 1. "Faith is the substance of things

hoped for." Matth. xii. 21. "In his name shall the Gentiles trust." In the original, ἐλπιοῦσι, hope.

§ 62. Looking to, or looking for, are used as phrases equivalent to trusting, seeking, hoping, waiting, believing on, &c. Num. xxi. 9. "And it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived; together with John iii. 14, 15. "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have eternal life." Isa. xlv. 22. "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." Psal. cxxiii. 1, 2. "Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens. Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that he have mercy upon us."

§ 63. Rolling one's self, or burden, on the Lord, is an expression used as equivalent to trusting. Psal. xxii. 8. "He trusted in the Lord, that he would deliver him:" In the original, "He rolled himself on the Lord." Psal. xxxvii. 5. "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass." In the Hebrew, *Roll thy way upon the Lord.* Prov. xvi. 3. "Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established." In the Hebrew, *Roll thy works.*

§ 64. Leaning on the Lord, and staying ourselves on him, are of the same force. Micah iii. 11. "Yet will they lean on the Lord." Cant. viii. 5. "Who is this that cometh up out of the wilderness, leaning on her beloved?"

§ 65. Relying on God, 2 Chron. xiii. 18. "Thus the children of Israel were brought under at that time, and the children of Judah prevailed; because they relied upon the Lord God of their fathers;" compared with verse 14, 15, wherein it is said, "And when Judah looked back, behold the battle was before and behind; and they cried unto the Lord, and the priests sounded with the trumpets. Then the men of Judah gave a shout; and as the men of Judah shouted, it came to pass that God smote Jeroboam and all Israel, before Abijah and Judah."

§ 66. Committing ourselves, our cause, &c. unto God, is of the same force. Job v. 8. "I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause, who doth great things, and unsearchable, marvellous things without number."

§ 67. The distinction of the several constituent parts or acts of faith, into assent, consent, and affiance, if strictly considered and examined, will appear not to be proper and just, or strictly according to the truth and nature of things; because the parts are not all entirely distinct one from another, and so are in some measure confounded one with another: For the last, viz. affiance, implies the other two, assent and consent; and is nothing else but a man's assent and consent, with particular relation or application to himself and his own case, together with the effect of all in his own quietness and comfort of mind, and boldness in venturing on this foundation, in conduct and practice.

Affiance consists in these five things: 1. Consent to something proposed, to be obtained by another person, as good, eligible or desirable, and so for him. 2. Assent of the judgment to the reality of the good, as to be obtained by him; that he is sufficient, faithful, &c. 3. The mind's applying itself to him for it, which is no other than the soul's desiring him to possess us of this good consented to, expressing these desires before him, that he may see and take notice of them, i. e. expressing these desires with an apprehension that he sees our hearts, and designedly spreading them before him, to the end that they might be observed by him and gratified. 4. Hoping that the good will be obtained in this way; which hope consists in two things, viz. expectation of the good in this way; and in some ease, quietness, or comfort of mind arising from this expectation. 5. Adventuring some interest on this hope in practice; which consists either in doing something that implies trouble, or brings expense or suffering, or in omitting something that we should otherwise do; by which omission some good is foregone, or some evil is brought on.

If these acts cannot in strictness all take place at the same moment of time, though they follow one another in the order of nature, yet they are all implied in the act that is exercised

the first moment, so far as that act is of such a nature as implies a necessary tendency to what follows. In these three last especially consists man's *committing himself to Christ as a Saviour.* In the third and fourth especially consists the soul's *looking to Christ as a Saviour.*

§ 68. In that consent to the way or method of salvation, which there is in saving faith, the heart has especially respect to two things in that method, that are the peculiar glory of it, and whereby it is peculiarly contrary to corrupt nature: 1. Its being a way wherein God is so exalted and set so high, and man so debased and set so low. God is made all in all, and man nothing. God is magnified as self-sufficient and allsufficient, and as being all in all to us; his power and his grace, and Christ's satisfaction and merits being all: And man is annihilated; his power, his righteousness, his dignity, his works, are made nothing of.

2. Its being so holy a way; a way of mere mercy, yet of holy mercy; mercy in saving the sinner, but shewing no favor or countenance to sin; a way of free grace, yet of holy grace; not grace exercised to the prejudice of God's holiness, but in such a way as peculiarly to manifest God's hatred of sin and opposition to it, and strict justice in punishing it, and that he will by no means clear the guilty; every way manifesting the infinite evil and odiousness of sin, much more than if there had been no salvation offered. Therefore, humiliation and holiness are the chief ingredients in the act of consent to this way of salvation.

In these things I have spoken only of a consent to the way or method of salvation. But in saving faith is included also a consent to the salvation itself, or the benefits procured. What is peculiarly contrary to this in corrupt nature, is a worldly spirit; and therefore in order to this act of consent, there must be mortification to, or weanedness from the world, and a selling of all for the pearl of great price.

Lastly, Besides all these, there is in saving faith a consent to Christ himself, or a closing of the heart or inclination with the person of Christ. This implies each of the three things forementioned, viz. humiliation, holiness, and renouncing the

world. It implies humiliation; for as long as men deify themselves, they will not adore Jesus Christ. It implies sanctification; for Christ's beauty, for which his person is delighted in and chosen, is especially his holiness. It implies forsaking the world; for as long as men set their hearts on the world as their chief good, and have that as the chief object of the relish and complaisance of their minds, they will not relish and take complaisance in Christ, and set their hearts on him as their best good. The heart of a true believer consents to three things exhibited in the gospel of salvation. 1. The person who is the author of the salvation. 2. The benefit, or the salvation itself. 3. The way or method in which this person is the author of this benefit.

§ 69. Faith implies a cleaving of the heart to Christ; because a trusting in others is spoken of as a departing of the heart from the Lord. Jer. xvii. 5. "Cursed is the man that trusteth in man, whose heart departeth from the Lord." So a heart of unbelief is a heart that departeth from the Lord. Heb. iii. 12. "Lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." Faith has a double office. It accepts Christ from God, and presents Christ to God. It accepts Christ in the word, and makes use of him in prayer. In the word, God offereth him to you, as Lord and Saviour, to give you repentance and remission of sins. Now, when you consent to God's terms, this is to believe in him....Faith presents Christ to God; Eph. iii. 12. "In whom we have boldness and access with confidence, by the faith of him." All religion lieth in coming to God by him. Heb. vii. 25. "Wherefore he is able also to save them unto the uttermost, that come unto God through him; seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." *Dr. Manton*, vol. v. p. 382.

§ 70. We often read in the New Testament of the calling of Christians, of their high calling; and that effect of God's word and spirit, by which they are brought to a saving faith, is called their calling; and true believers are spoken of as the called of God, called saints, &c. And this call is often represented as an invitation, an invitation to come to Christ,

to come and join themselves to him, to come to follow him, to continue with him, to be of his party, his society, seeking his interest, &c. To come to him for his benefits, to come for deliverance from calamity and misery, to come for safety, to come for rest, to come to eat and drink; an invitation to come into his house, to a feast. And faith is often called by the name of ὑπακοη, hearing, hearkening, yielding to, and obeying the gospel, obeying Christ, being obedient to the faith, obeying the form of doctrine, &c.

Hence we may learn the nature of saving faith; that it is an accepting, yielding to, and complying with, the gospel, as such a call and invitation; which implies the hearing of the mind, i. e. the mind's apprehending or understanding the call; a believing of the voice, and the offer and promises contained in it; and accepting, esteeming, prizing the person and benefits invited to; a falling in of the inclination, the choice, the affection, &c.

§ 71. Faith, as the word is used in scripture, does not only signify dependence, as it appears in venturing in practice, but also as it appears in the rest of the mind, in opposition to anxiety; as appears by Matth. vi. 25....34. "Take no thought....shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" So Luke xii. 22....32. "Take no thought....how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith! Fear not little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom," compared with Philip. iv. 6, 7, and Peter v. 7. This is agreeable to that phrase used in the Old Testament for trusting, "Roll thy burthen on the Lord." Matth. xiv. 30, 31. "But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and, beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"

§ 72. The following inquiries concerning saving faith, are proper and important.

1. Whether justifying faith, in its proper essence, implies, besides the act of the judgment, also an act of the inclination and will?

2. Whether it properly implies love in its essence?

3. What are the scripture descriptions, characters, and representations of justifying faith?

4. What is the true definition of justifying faith, a definition which agrees with the scripture representation of faith, and takes all in?

5. Whether the word *faith*, as used in the gospel, has a signification diverse from what it has in common speech?

6. Why the word faith, is used to signify this complex act of the mind?

7. How far trusting in Christ is of the nature and essence of faith?

8 Whether assent, consent and affiance, be a proper distribution of the various and distinct acts of faith?

9. Whether hope, as the word is used in the New Testament, be properly distinct from saving faith?

10. What does the word *trust* imply in common speech?

11. What it implies as used in Scripture?

12. In what sense faith implies obedience?

13. What is the nature of selfrighteousness?

14. How selfrighteousness is peculiarly opposite to the nature of faith?

15. In what sense there must be a particular application in the act of saving faith?

16. Whether the first act of faith is certainly more lively and sensible, than some of the weakest of the consequent acts of saving faith?

17. In what sense, perseverance in faith is necessary to salvation?

18. What sort of evidence is it which is the principal immediate ground of that assent of the judgment which is implied in saving faith?

§ 73. Calling on the name of Christ, is often spoken of as the proper expression of saving faith in Christ. Acts ii. 21; Rom. x. 13, 14; 1 Cor. i. 2; Acts ix. 14, 21, 22, 16. Faith is trusting in Christ. *See Doddridge's* note on Acts xvi. 31.

What in that prophecy of the Messiah in Isa. xlii. 4, is expressed thus, "The Isles shall wait for his law," is, as cit-

ed in Matth. xviii. 21. "In his name shall the Gentiles trust."

Coming to Christ, and believing in him, are evidently used as equipollent expressions, in John vi. 29, 30, 35, 37, 40, 44, 45, 47, 64, 65. This coming, wherein consists believing, implies an attraction of the heart, as is manifest by verses 44, 45.

Christ, by eating his flesh and drinking his blood, evidently means the same thing that he intends in the same chapter, by believing in him, and coming to him. Compare John vi. 50, 51, 53, 54, 56, 57, 58, with verses 29, 30, 35, 36, 37, 40, 44, 45, 47, 64, 65.

Saving faith is called in Heb. iii. 6. παρρησια και το καυχημα της ελπιδος, "The confidence and the rejoicing of the hope." Well expressing the act of the whole soul that is implied in saving faith, the judgment, the will and affections. So in Heb. x. 23. "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith." In the original it is ελπιδος, Hope.

Justifying faith is nothing else, but true virtue in its proper and genuine breathings adapted to the case, to the revelation made, the state we are in, the benefit to be received and the way and means of it, and our relation to these things.

Faith is a sincere seeking righteousness and salvation, of Christ, and in Christ. Rom. ix. 31, 32. "Hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law." See also the promises made, both in the Old Testament and New, to them that seek the Lord. To saving faith in Christ belongs adoration, submission, and subjection, as appears by Isa. xlv. "Unto me every knee shall bow," with the foregoing and following verses.

The general description of justifying faith is a proper reception of Christ and his salvation, or a proper active union of the soul to Christ as a Saviour. I say, a proper reception, which implies that it is a receiving him in a manner agreeable to his office and character and relation to us, in which he is exhibited and offered to us, and with regard to those ends and effects for which he is given to mankind, was sent into the

world, and is appointed to be preached; and in a manner agreeable to the way in which he is exhibited, made known, and offered, i. e. by divine revelation, without being exhibited to the view of ourselves; and the nature of his person, character, offices and benefits; and the way of salvation, as related to our faculties, mysterious and incomprehensible; and in a manner agreeable to our circumstances, and our particular necessities, and immediate and infinite personal concern with the revelation and offer of the Saviour. An union of soul to this Saviour, and a reception of him and his salvation, which is proper in these respects, is most aptly called by the name of faith.

§ 74. That love belongs to the essence of saving faith, is manifest by comparing Isaiah lxiv. 4. "Men have not heard nor perceived by the ear, &c. what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him," as cited by the apostle, 1 Cor. ii. 9. "It is for them that love him." Now it is evident that waiting for God, in the Old Testament, signifies the same with faith in God, or trusting in God.

Dr. Goodwin, in vol. 1, of his works, p. 286, says, "The Papists say, wickedly and wretchedly, that love is the form and soul of faith." But how does the truth of this charge of wickedness appear?

It was of old the coming to the sacrifice, as one consenting to the offering, active in choosing and constituting that as his offering, and looking to it as the means of atonement for his sins, that interested him in the sacrifice; as appears by Heb. x. 1, 2. "Could never make the comers thereunto perfect. For then, the worshippers once purged, should have had no more conscience of sins." Compare chap. ix. 9.

Believing in one for any benefit, as sufficient for the benefit, and disposed to procure it, and accordingly leaving our interest with him, with regard to that benefit, is implied in trusting in him, Job xxxix. 11. "Wilt thou trust him, because his strength is great? Or wilt thou leave thy labor with him? Wilt thou believe him, that he will bring home thy seed, and gather it into thy barn?"

As the whole soul in all its faculties is the proper subject and agent of faith, so undoubtedly there are two things in saving faith, viz. belief of the truth, and an answerable disposition of heart. And therefore faith may be defined, a thorough believing of what the gospel reveals of a Saviour of sinners, as true and perfectly good, with the exercise of an answerable disposition towards him. That true faith, in the scripture sense of it, implies not only the exercise of the understanding, but of the heart or disposition, is very manifest. Many important things pertaining to saving religion, which the Scripture speaks of under the name of some exercise of the understanding, imply the disposition and exercise of the heart also. Such as, knowing God....understanding the word of God....having eyes to see, and an heart to understand. And piety is called wisdom. So men's wickedness is called ignorance, folly, &c. A being wise in one's own eyes, implies an high opinion of himself, with an agreeable or answerable disposition.

It is evident that trust in Christ implies the disposition or will, the receiving and embracing of the heart. For we do not trust in any person or thing for any thing but good, or what is agreeable to us; what we choose, incline to, and desire. Yea, trusting commonly is used with respect to great good; good that we choose, as what we depend upon for support, satisfaction, happiness, &c.

§ 75. The following things concerning the nature of faith, are extracted from Dr. Sherlock's *several discourses, preached at Temple Church;* discourse 14, page 257, &c.

"Faith, as some think, is no proper subject for exhortation. For if faith is a mere act of the mind judging upon motives of credibility, it is as reasonable to exhort a man to see with his eyes, as to judge with his understanding. But then, if this be the true notion of faith, how comes it that in every page we find the praises of it in the gospel? What is there in this to deserve the blessings promised to the faithful? Or whence is it that the whole of our salvation is put upon this foot? How come all these prerogatives to belong to faith, if faith be nothing else but believing things in them-

selves credible? Why are we not said to be justified by light as well as by faith? For is there not the same virtue in seeing things visible, as in believing things credible? Tell me then, what is faith, that it should raise men above the level of mortality, and make men become like the angels of heaven?....But further, if it be only an act of the understanding formed upon due reasons, how comes it to be described in Scripture, as having its seat in the heart? The apostle in the text, (Heb. iii. 12,) cautions against an evil heart of unbelief; and the same notion prevails throughout the books of Scripture, and is as early as our Saviour's first preaching. Faith, which is the principle of the gospel, respects the promises and declaration of God, and includes a sure trust and reliance on him for the performance. Beyond this, there is no further act of faith. We are not taught to believe this, in order to our believing something else; but here, faith has its full completion, and leads immediately to the practice of virtue and holiness. For this end was the Son of God revealed, to make known the mind and will of the Father, to declare his mercy and pardon, and to confirm the promises of eternal life to mankind. He that believes and accepts this deliverance from the bondage of sin, and through patience and perseverance in well doing, waits for the blessed hope of immortality; who passes through the world as a stranger and pilgrim, looking for another country, and a city whose builder is God; this is he whose faith shall receive the promise, whose confidence shall have great recompence of reward."

Here Dr. Sherlock speaks of that true Christian faith, which is the principle of the gospel, as including a sure trust and reliance on God. The same author elsewhere in the same book, page 251, speaks of reliance or dependence on God, as arising from a principle of love to God, in the words following: "The duties we owe to God, are founded in the relation between God and us. I observed likewise to you, that love naturally transforms itself into all relative duties, which arise from the circumstances of the person related. Thus, in the present case, if we love God, and consid-

or him as Lord and Governor of the world, our love will soon become obedience. If we consider him as wise, and good, and gracious, our love will become honor and adoration. If we add to these our own natural weakness and infirmity, love will teach us dependence, and prompt us in all our wants to fly for refuge to our Great Protector."

§ 76. That expression in Psalm l. 5. "Gather my saints, that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice," seems to shew that such is the nature of true faith in Christ, that believers do therein, by the sincere, full act of their minds and hearts, appoint Christ to be their sacrifice; as such, bring him an offering to God; i. e. they entirely concur with what was done in his offering himself a sacrifice for sinners, as a real sacrifice sufficient and proper for them, trusting in this sacrifice. Faith is the believer's coming to God, and giving himself up to God, hoping for acceptance by this sacrifice, and taking God for his God, hoping for an interest in him as such by this sacrifice, that so God may be his God, and he one of his people.

§ 77. It does not seem congruous, and in itself it is not proper for God quite to pass over sin, rebellion and treachery, and receive the offender into his entire favor, either without a repentance and sorrow, and detestation of his fault, adequate to the aggravation of it, (which can never be) or, if there be another that appears in his stead, and has done and suffered so much as fully to satisfy and pay the debt, it will not be proper to forgive him, whatever is done for him by his representative for his expiation, unless there be an accepting of it by the offender for that end, a sense of its being adequate to the offence, and an applying of the mind to him, and a recumbence upon him for satisfaction. This now seems to me evident from the very light of nature.

§ 78. Justifying faith is more properly called faith than acceptance, because the things received are spiritual and unseen, and because they are received as future, and entirely the free gift of God.

§ 79. Even the being of a God can be made most rationally and demonstratively evident, by divine revelation, and by

gracious spiritual illumination; after the same manner as we have shewn the Christian religion, the superstructure built upon that foundation, is evident. Suppose all the world had otherwise been ignorant of the being of a God before, yet they might know it, because God has revealed himself; he has shewn himself; he has said a great deal to us, and conversed much with us. And this is every whit as rational a way of being convinced of the being of God, as it is of being convinced of the being of a man who comes from an unknown region, and shews himself to us, and converses with us for a long time. We have no other reason to be convinced of his being, than only that we see a long series of external concordant signs of an understanding, will and design, and various affections. The same way God makes known himself to us in his word. And if we have a full and comprehensive knowledge of the revelation made, of the things revealed, and of the various relations and respects of the various parts, their harmonies, congruities, and mutual concordances, there appear most indubitable signs and expressions of a very high and transcendent understanding, together with a great and mighty design, an exceeding wisdom, or most magnificent power and authority, a marvellous purity, holiness and goodness. So that if we never knew there was any such being before, yet we might be certain that this must be such an one.

§ 80. One that is well acquainted with the gospel, and sees the beauties, the harmonies, the majesty, the power, and the glorious wisdom of it and the like, may, only by viewing it, be as certain that it is no human work, as a man that is well acquainted with mankind and their works, may, by contemplating the sun, know it is not a human work; or, when he goes upon an island, and sees the various trees, and the manner of their growing, and blossoming, and bearing fruit, may know that they are not the work of man.

§ 81. Faith is very often in the Scripture called *trust*, especially in the Old Testament. Now, trusting is something more than mere believing. Believing is the assent to any truth testified; trusting, always respects truth that near-

ly concerns ourselves, in regard of some benefit of our own that it reveals to us, and some benefit that the revealer is the author of. It is the acquiescence of the mind in a belief of any person, that by his word reveals or represents himself to us as the author of some good that concerns us. If the benefit be a deliverance or preservation from misery, it is a being easy in a belief that he will do it. So, if we say, a man trusts in a castle to save him from his enemies, we mean, his mind is easy, and rests in a persuasion that it will keep him safe. If the benefit be the bestowment of happiness, it is the mind's acquiescing in it, that he will accomplish it; that is, he is persuaded he will do it; he has such a persuasion, that he rejoices in confidence of it.

Thus, if a man has promised a child to make him his heir, if we say he trusts in him to make him his heir, we mean he has such a belief of what he promises, that his mind acquiesces and rejoices in it, so as not to be disturbed by doubts and questions whether he will perform it. These things all the world means by trust. The first fruit of trust is being willing to do and undergo in the expectation of some thing. He that does not expect the benefit, so much as to make him ready to do or undergo, dares not trust it: He dares not run the venture of it. Therefore, they may be said to trust in Christ, and they only, that are ready to do and undergo all that he desires, in expectation of his redemption. And the faith of those that dare not do so, is unsound. Therefore, such trials are called the trials of faith.

But this is to be considered, that Christ does not promise that he will be the author of our redemption, but upon condition; and we have not performed that condition, until we have believed. Therefore, we have no grounds, until we have once believed, to acquiesce in it that Christ will save us. Therefore, the first act of faith is no more than this, the acquiescence of the mind in him in what he does declare absolutely. It is the soul's resting in him, and adhering to him, so far as his word does reveal him to all as a Saviour for sinners, as one that has wrought out redemption, as a sufficient Saviour, as a Saviour suited to their case, as a willing Saviour, as the author of an excellent salvation,

&c. so as to be encouraged heartily to seek salvation of him, to come to him, to love, desire, and thirst after him as a Saviour, and fly for refuge to him. This is the very same thing in substance, as that trust we spoke of before, and is the very essence of it. This is all the difference, that it was attended with this additional belief, viz. that the subject had performed the condition, which does not belong to the essence of faith. That definition which we gave of trust before, holds, viz. the acquiescence of the mind in the word of any person who reveals himself to us as the author of some good that nearly concerns us. Trusting is not only believing that a person will accomplish the good he promises: The thing that he promises may be very good, and the person promising or offering may be believed, and yet not properly trusted in; for the person to whom the offer is made, may not be sensible that the thing is good, and he may not desire it. If he offers to deliver him from something that is his misery, perhaps he is not sensible that it is his misery; or, he may offer to bestow that which is his happiness, but he may not be sensible that it is happiness. If so, though he believes him, he does not properly trust in him for it; for he does not seek or desire what he offers; and there can be no adherence or acquiescence of mind. If a man offers another to rescue him from captivity, and carry him to his own country; if the latter believes the former will do it, and yet does not desire it, he cannot be said to trust in him for it. And if the thing be accounted good, and be believed, yet if the person to whom it is offered, does not like the person that does it, or the way of accomplishment of it, there cannot be an entire trust, because there is not a full adherence and acquiescence of mind.

§ 82. There are these two ways in which the mind may be said to be sensible that any thing is good or excellent: 1. When the mind judges that any thing is such as, by the agreement of mankind, is called good or excellent, viz. that which is most to general advantage, and that between which and reward there is a suitableness; or that which is agreeable to the law of the country or law of God. It is a being merely convinced in judgment, that a thing is according to

the meaning of the word, good, as the word is generally applied. 2. The mind is sensible of good in another sense, when it is so sensible of the beauty and amiableness of the thing, that it is sensible of pleasure and delight in the presence of the idea of it. This kind of sensibleness of good, carries in it an act of the will, or inclination or spirit of the mind, as well as of the understanding.

§ 83. The conditions of justification are, repentance and faith; and the freedom of grace appears in the forgiving of sin upon repentance, or only for our being willing to part with it, after the same manner as the bestowment of eternal life, only for accepting of it. For to make us an offer of freedom from a thing, only for quitting of it, is equivalent to the offering the possession of a thing for the receiving of it. God makes us this offer, that if we will in our hearts quit sin, we shall be freed from it, and all the evil that belongs to it, and flows from it; which is the same thing as the offering us freedom only for accepting it. Accepting, in this case, is quitting and parting with, in our wills and inclination. So that repentance is implied in faith; it is a part of our willing reception of the salvation of Jesus Christ; though faith with respect to sin, implies something more in it, viz. a respect to Christ, as him by whom we have deliverance. Thus by faith we destroy sin, Gal. ii. 18.

§ 84. As to that question, Whether closing with Christ in his kingly office be of the essence of justifying faith? I would say, 1. That accepting Christ in his kingly office, is doubtless the proper condition of having an interest in Christ's kingly office, and so the condition of that salvation which he bestows in the execution of that office; as much as accepting the forgiveness of sins, is the proper condition of the forgiveness of sin. Christ, in his kingly office, bestows salvation; and therefore, accepting him in his kingly office, by a disposition to sell all and suffer all in duty to Christ, and giving proper respect and honor to him, is the proper condition of salvation. This is manifest by Heb. v. 9. "And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him;" and by Rom. x. 10. "For with

the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." The apostle speaks of such a confessing of Christ, or outward and open testifying our respect to him, and adhering to our duty to him, as exposed to suffering, reproach and persecution. And that such a disposition and practice is of the essence of saving faith, is manifest by John xii. 42, 43. "Nevertheless, among the chief rulers also, many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God;"....compared with John v. 44. "How can ye believe, which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only?"

2. Accepting Christ as a priest and king, cannot be separated. They not only cannot be separated, or be asunder in their subject, but they cannot be considered as separate things in their natures; for they are implied one in another. Accepting Christ as a king, is implied in accepting him as a priest: For, as a priest, he procures a title to the benefits of his kingly office; and therefore, to accept him as a priest, implies an accepting him in his kingly office: For we cannot accept the purchase of his priesthood, but by accepting the benefits purchased. If faith is supposed to contain no more immediately, than only an accepting of Christ as a Mediator for our justification; yet that justification implies a giving a title to the benefits of his kingly office, viz. salvation from sin, and conformity to his nature and will, and actual salvation by actual deliverance from our enemies, and the bestowment of glory.

§ 85. Faith divine, is a spiritual conviction of the truth of the things of religion. Some have objected against a spiritual sight of divine things in their glorious, excellent and divine form, as being the foundation of a conviction of the truth or real existence of them; because, say they, the existence of things is in the order of nature before forms or qualities of them as excellent or odious; and so the knowledge of their existence must go before the sight of their form or quality; they must be known to be, before they are seen to be excel-

lent. I answer, It is true, things must be known to be, before they are known to be excellent, if by this proposition it be understood, that things must be known really to exist, before they can be known really to exist excellent, or really to exist with such and such beauty. And all the force of the objection depends on such a meaning of this assertion. But if thereby be intended, that a thing must be known to have a real existence before the person has a clear understanding, idea or apprehension of the thing proposed or objected to his view, as it is in its qualities either odious or beautiful, then the assertion is not true; for his having a clear idea of something proposed to his understanding or view, as very beautiful or very odious, as is proposed, does not suppose its reality; that is, it does not presuppose it, though its real existence may perhaps follow from it. But, in our way of understanding things in general of all kinds, we first have some understanding or view of the thing in its qualities, before we know its existence. Thus it is in things that we know by our external senses, by our bodily sight for instance. We first see them, or have a clear idea of them by sight, before we know their existence by our sight. We first see the sun, and have a strong, lively and clear idea of it in its qualities, its shape, its brightness, &c. before we know there actually exists such a body.

§ 86. Faith in Christ is the condition of salvation. It is observable, that as trusting in God, hoping in him, waiting for him, &c. are abundantly insisted on in the Old Testament, as the main condition of God's favor, protection, deliverance and salvation, in the book of Psalms and elsewhere; so, in most of those places where these graces of trust and hope are so insisted upon, the subjects of them are represented as being in a state of trial, trouble, difficulty, danger, opposition and oppression of enemies, and the like. And the clearer revelation, and more abundant light of the New Testament, bring into clearer view the state that all mankind are in with regard to those things that are invisible, the invisible God, an invisible world, and invisible enemies, and so shew men's lost, miserable, captivated, dangerous and helpless state, and

reveal the infinite mercy of God, and his glorious allsufficiency to such wretched, helpless creatures, and also exhibit Christ in the character of the Saviour of the miserable, the great Redeemer of captives, &c. Hence faith, trust and hope, are most fitly insisted on as the duty and qualification peculiarly proper for all mankind, and the virtue proper to be exercised in their circumstances towards God and Christ, as they reveal themselves in the gospel, as belonging to them in their character and relation to us, and concern with us, in which they are there exhibited; and as the grand condition of our salvation, or our receiving those benefits, which we, as sinful, miserable and helpless creatures, need from them, and which Christ, as a Redeemer, appears ready to bestow.

§ 87. Dr. Manton reconciles the Apostle James and the Apostle Paul in the following manner, in his 5th volume of Sermons, p. 374. "Justification hath respect to some accusation: Now, as there is a twofold law, there is a twofold accusation and justification; the law of works, and the law of grace. Now, when we are accused as breakers of the law of works, that is, as sinners obnoxious to the wrath of God, we plead Christ's satisfaction as our righteousness, no works of our own. But when we are accused as nonperformers of the conditions of the covenant of grace, as being neglectors and rejectors of Christ the Mediator, we are justified by producing our faith or sincere obedience; so that our righteousness by the new covenant is subordinate to our universal righteousness, with respect to the great law of God; and that we have only by Christ. If we are charged that we have broken the first covenant, the covenant of works, we allege Christ's satisfaction and merit. If charged not to have performed the conditions of the law of grace, we answer it by producing our faith, repentance and new obedience, and so shew it to be a false charge. Our first and supreme righteousness consists in the pardon of our sins, and our acceptance in the beloved, and our right to impunity and glory. Our second and subordinate righteousness, in having the true condition of pardon and life. In the first sense, Christ's righteousness alone is our justification and righteousness. Faith and repentance,

only to those that were born of God. Thereby cannot be meant, therefore, only a mere assent to the doctrines of the gospel, because that is common to saints and sinners, as is very evident. The Apostle James plainly teaches in chapter ii. that this faith may be in those that are not in a state of salvation. And we read in the Evangelists, of many that in this sense believed, to whom Christ did not commit himself, because he knew what was in them; John ii. at the latter end, and many other places. When it is said, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God;" thereby cannot be meant, whosoever has such an assent as is perfect, so as to exclude all remaining unbelief; for it is evident, that the faith of good men does not do this. Thus, a true believer said, Mark ix. 24. "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief;" and Christ is often reproving his true disciples, that they have so little faith. He often says to them, "O ye of little faith;" and speaks sometimes as if their faith were less than a grain of mustard seed. Nor can the apostle, when he says, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God," mean, that whosoever has a predominant assent, or an assent that prevails above his dissent, or whose judgment preponderates that way, and has more weight in that scale than the other; because it is plain that it is not true that every one that believes in this sense, is born of God. Many natural, unregenerate men, have such a preponderating judgment of the truth of the doctrines of the gospel; without it, there is no belief of it at all. For believing, in the lowest sense, implies a preponderating judgment; but it is evident, as just now was observed, that many natural men do believe: They do judge that the doctrine is true, as the devils do.

And again, when the apostle says, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God;" all that he intends, cannot be only, that whosoever is come to a certain particular intermediate degree of assent, between the lowest degree of preponderating assent and a perfect assent, excluding all remains of unbelief; he cannot mean any certain particular intermediate degree of assent, still meaning nothing but mere assent by believing. For he does not say, he that believes or

assents that Jesus is the Christ, to such a certain degree is born of God; but whosoever believes that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God; by which must be understood, that whosoever at all performs that act which the apostle calls by that name, or whosoever has any thing at all of that kind of virtue which the apostle calls believing, is born of God; and that he that is not born of God, has not that virtue that he meant, but is wholly without it. And besides, it would be unreasonable to suppose, that by this believing, which the apostle there and elsewhere lays down as such a grand note of distinction between those that are born of God, and those that are not, is meant only a certain degree of assent, which such have, that differs less from what those may have, that are not born of God, than nine hundred and ninety and nine from a thousand; yea, that differs from it an infinitely little. For this is the case, if the difference be only gradual, and it be only a certain degree of faith that is the mark of being born of God. If this was the apostle's meaning, he would use words in a manner not consistent with the use of language, as he would call things infinitely nearly alike by such distant and contrary names; and would represent the subjects in whom they are, as of such different and contrary characters, calling one believer, and the other unbeliever, one the children of God, and those that are born of God, and the other the children of the devil, as this apostle calls all that are not born of God, in this epistle, (see chapter iii. 9, 10,) and would represent one as setting to his seal that God is true, and the other as making him a liar, as in the 10th verse of the context. And besides, if this were the case, if believers in this sense only, with such an infinitely small gradual difference, was all that he meant, it would be no such notable distinction between those that are born of God and those that are not, as the apostle represents, and as this apostle, and other apostles, do every where signify. Nay, it would not be fit to be used as a sign or characteristic for men to distinguish themselves by; for such minute, gradual differences, which in this case would be alone certainly distinguishing, are altogether undiscernible, or at least with great difficulty determined; therefore, are not fit to be given as distinguishing notes of the

Christian character. If words are every where used after this manner in the Bible, and, by faith in Christ, as the word is generally used there, is meant only the assent of the understanding, and that not merely a predominant assent, nor yet a perfect assent, excluding all remaining unbelief, but only a certain degree of assent between these two, rising up just to such a precise height, so that he that has this shall every where be called a believer; and he whose assent, though it predominates also, and rises up as high as the other within an infinitely little, shall be called an unbeliever, one that wickedly makes God a liar, &c. this is in effect to use words without any determinate meaning at all, or, which is the same thing, any meaning proportioned to our understandings; therefore, there is undoubtedly some great and notable difference between the faith of those who are in a state of salvation, and that of those who are not: Insomuch that, without that very faith, according to the common use of language in these days, those who were not in a state of salvation, may be said not to believe at all. And besides, that virtue that the apostle here speaks of as such a great and distinguishing note of a child of God, he plainly speaks of as a supernatural thing, as something not in natural men, and given only in regeneration or being born of God, which is the great change of men from that which is natural to that which is supernatural. Men may have what is natural, by their being born, born in a natural way; but they have what is supernatural, by being born again, and born of God. But, says the apostle, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God." The same faith is plainly spoken of as a supernatural thing in the foregoing chapter, verse 15. "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God."

But common faith is not a supernatural thing, any more than a belief of any history. It is obtained by the same means. If one be natural, and the other supernatural, then undoubtedly the difference is not only such a gradual difference, differing but an infinitely little. If all lies in the degree of assent, let us suppose that a thousand degrees of assent be required

to salvation, and that there is no difference in kind in the faith of others; how unreasonable is it to say, that when a man can naturally raise his assent to nine hundred and ninetynine degrees, yet he cannot reach the other degree, by any improvement, but there must be a new birth in order to the other degree! And as it is thus evident, that the faith or believing that Jesus is the Christ, which the apostle speaks of in the text, is some virtue intended by the apostle, differing not only in degree, but in nature and kind, from any faith that unregenerate men have; so I would observe, that it is evident, that this special faith, of which the apostle speaks, that so differs from common faith, is not only a faith that some Christians only have obtained, but that all have it that are in a state of salvation; because the same faith is often spoken of as that which first brings men into a state of salvation, and not merely as that which Christians attain to afterwards, after they have performed the condition of salvation.

How often are we taught, that it is by faith in Christ we are justified; and that he that believes not, is in a state of condemnation; and that it is by this, men pass from a state of condemnation to a state of salvation. Compare John v. 21. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my words, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life;" with chapter iii. 18. "He that believeth on him, is not condemned; but he that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." And this faith that thus brings into a state of life, is expressed in the same words as it is in the text, in John xx. 31. "But these things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing, ye might have life through his name." Thus it is manifest that the faith spoken of in the text, is the faith that all men have that are in a state of salvation, and the faith by which they first come into salvation, and that it is a faith especially differing in nature and kind from all common faith.

In the further prosecution of this discourse, I shall, 1. Bring some further arguments to prove, that saving faith

differs from common faith in nature and essence. 2. Shew wherein the essential difference lies, confirming the same from the Scriptures, which will further prove the truth of the doctrine.

First. I am to bring some farther arguments to prove the doctrine: And here I would observe, that there is some kind of difference or other, is most apparent from the vast distinction made in scripture, insomuch, that those who have faith, are all from time to time spoken of as justified, and in a state of salvation, having a title to eternal life, &c. Rom. i. 16, 17. "The gospel is the power of God to salvation to every one that believeth." And chap. iii. 22. "Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all, and upon all that believe." Rom. x. 4. "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." Acts xiii. 39, "And by him all that believe are justified." In these and other places, a state of salvation is predicated of every one that believeth or hath faith. It is not said of every one that believeth and walks answerably, or of every one that believeth and takes up an answerable resolution to obey; which would be to limit the proposition, and make an exception, and be as much as to say, not every one that is a believer, but to such believers only as not only believe, but obey. But this does not consist with these universal expressions: "The gospel is the power of God to salvation to every one that believeth." "The righteousness of God is unto all, and upon all them that believe." "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." And by the supposition, they that have not saving faith are in a state of damnation; as it is also expressly said in Scripture, "He that believeth not, shall be damned," and the like. So that it is evident that there is a great difference between the virtue that the scripture calls by the name *faith*, and speaks of as saving faith, let it be what it will, and all that is or can be in others. But here I would observe particularly: The difference must either be only in the degree of faith, and in the effects of it, or it is in the nature of the faith itself. And I would,

I. Shew that it is not merely a difference in degree.

1. There are other scriptures, besides the text, that speak of saving faith as a supernatural thing. Mat. xvi. 15, 16, 17. "He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my father which is in heaven." This must evidently be understood of a supernatural way of coming by this belief or faith; such a way as is greatly distinguished from instruction or judgment in other matters, such as the wise and prudent in temporal things had. So Luke x. 21, 22. "In that hour, Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight. No man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him." So, to the same purpose is John vi. 44, 45. "No man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him: And I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they all shall be taught of God: Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." And what is meant, is not merely that God gives it in his providence; for so he gives the knowledge of those wise and prudent men mentioned in the forecited passage. It is said, that he gives it by the teachings of his Spirit, as appears by 1 Cor. xii. 2. "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." And the common influences of the Spirit, such as natural men, or men that are unregenerated may have, are not meant, as appears by what the same apostle says in the same epistle, chap. ii. 14. "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." The things of the Spirit of God, to which the apostle has a special respect, are the doctrine of Christ crucified, as appears by the beginning

of the chapter, and by the foregoing chapter, which he says is to the Jews a *stumbling* block, and to the Greeks foolishness. And that the influence of the Spirit, in which this saving faith is given, is not any common influence, or any thing like it, but is that influence by which men are God's workmanship, made over again, or made new creatures, is evident, by Ephesians ii. 8, 9, 10. "For by grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves: It is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." And so, it is manifest by the text, that this influence by which this faith is given, is no common influence, but a regenerating influence, 1 John v. 1....5. "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God; and every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep his commandments," &c. It is spoken of as a great work, so wrought by God, as remarkably to shew his power, 2 Thess. i. 11. "Wherefore also, we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power." And that which makes the argument yet more clear and demonstrative is, that it is mentioned as one of the distinguishing characters of saving faith, that it is the faith of the operation of God; Col. ii. 12. "You are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." Now, would this faith be any distinguishing character of the true Christian, if it were not a faith of a different kind from that which others may have? And besides, it is evidently suggested in the words, that it is by a like wonderful operation as the raising of Christ from the dead; especially taken with the following verse. The words taken together are thus, verse 12, 13. "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also you are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins, and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together

with him, having forgiven you all trespasses." Let this be compared with Eph. i. 18, 19. "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power." Now, is it reasonable to suppose, that such distinctions as these would be taught, as taking place between saving faith and common faith, if there were no essential difference, but only a gradual difference, and they approached infinitely near to each other?

2. The distinguishing epithets and characters ascribed to saving faith in Scripture, are such as denote the difference to be in nature and kind, and not in degree only. One distinguishing epithet is *precious*, 2 Peter i. 1. "Like precious faith with us." Now, preciousness is what signifies more properly something of the quality, than of the degree. As preciousness in gold is more properly a designation of the quality of that kind of substance, than the quantity. And therefore, when gold is tried in the fire to see whether it be true gold or not, it is not the quantity of the substance that is tried by the fire, but the precious nature of the substance. So it is when faith is tried to see whether it be a saving faith or not. 1. Peter i. 7. "That the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honor, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ." If the trial was not of the nature and kind, but only of the quantity of faith; how exceedingly improper would be the comparison between the trial of faith and the trial of gold? Another distinguishing Scripture note of saving faith is, that it is the faith of Abraham. Rom. iv. 16. "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed, not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all." Now, the faith of Abraham cannot be faith of that degree of which Abraham's was; for undoubtedly multitudes are in a state of salvation, that have not that eminency of faith.

Therefore, nothing can be meant by the faith of Abraham, but faith of the same nature and kind. Again, another distinguishing Scripture note of saving faith is, that it is faith *unfeigned*. 1 Tim. i. 5. "Now the end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." 2 Tim. i. 5. "When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also." Now this is an epithet that denotes the nature of a thing, and not the degree of it. A thing may be unfeigned, and yet be but to a small degree. To be unfeigned, is to be really a thing of that nature and kind which it pretends to be; and not a false appearance, or mere resemblance of it. Again, another note of distinction between saving faith and common faith, plainly implied in Scripture, is, that it differs from the faith of devils. It is implied in James ii. 18, 19. "Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: Shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou dost well: The devils also believe and tremble." Here it is first implied, that there is a difference between saving faith and common, that may be shewn by works; a difference in the cause, that may be shewn by the effects; and then it is implied this difference lies in something wherein it differs from the faith of devils; otherwise there is no force in the apostle's reasoning. But this difference cannot lie in the degree of the assent of the understanding; for the devils have as high a degree of assent as the real Christian. The difference then must lie in the peculiar nature of the faith.

3. That the difference between common faith and saving faith does not lie in the degree only, but in the nature and essence of it, appears by this; that those who are in a state of damnation are spoken of as being wholly destitute of it, as wholly without that sort of faith that the saints have. They are spoken of as those that believe not, and having the gospel hid from them, being blind with regard to this light; as 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them

that are lost: In whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." Now, can these things be said with any propriety, of such as are lost in general, if many of them as well as the saved, have the same sort of faith of the same gospel, but only in a less degree, and some of them falling short in degree, but very little, perhaps one degree in a million? How can it be proper to speak of the others, so little excelling them in the degree of the same light, as having the light of the knowledge of the glory of God shining unto them, and beholding as with open face the glory of the Lord, as is said of all true believers in the context? While those are spoken of as having the gospel hid from them, their minds blinded, lest the light of the glorious gospel should shine unto them, and so as being lost, or in a state of damnation? Such interpretations of Scripture are unreasonable.

4. That the difference between saving faith and common faith is not in degree, but in nature and kind, appears from this, that, in the Scripture, saving faith, when weakest, and attended with very great doubts, yet is said never to fail. Luke xxii. 31, 32. "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." The faith of Peter was attended with very great doubts concerning Christ and his cause. Now, if the distinction between saving faith and other faith be only in the degree of assent, whereby a man was brought fully to assent to the truth, and to cease greatly to question it; then Peter's faith would have failed. He would have been without any saving faith. For he greatly questioned the truth concerning Christ and his kingdom, especially when he denied him. Other disciples did so too; for they all forsook him and fled. Therefore it follows, that there is something peculiar in the very nature of saving faith, that remains in times even of greatest doubt, and even at those times distinguishes it from all common faith.

I now proceed, II. To shew that it does not consist only in the difference of effects. The supposition that I would disprove is this, That there is no difference between saving faith and common faith as to their nature: All the difference lies in this, that in him that is in a state of salvation, faith produces another effect; it works another way; it produces a settled determination of mind, to walk in a way of universal and persevering obedience. In the unregenerate, although his faith be the same with that of the regenerate, and he has the same assent of his understanding to the truths of the gospel, yet it does not prove effectual to bring him to such a resolution and answerable practice. In opposition to this notion, I would observe,

1. That it is contrary to the reason of mankind, to suppose different effects, without any difference in the cause. It has ever been counted to be good reasoning from the effect to the cause; and it is a way of reasoning that common sense leads mankind to. But if, from a different effect, there is no arguing any difference in the cause, this way of reasoning must be given up. If there be a difference in the effect, that does not arise from some difference in the cause, then there is something in the effect that proceeds not from its cause, viz. that diversity; because there is no diversity in the cause to answer it: Therefore, that diversity must arise from nothing, and consequently is no effect of any thing; which is contrary to the supposition. So this hypothesis is at once reduced to a contradiction. If there be a difference in the effect, that difference must arise from something; and that which it arises from, let it be what it will, must be the cause of it. And if faith be the cause of this diversity in the effect, as is supposed, then I would ask, what is there in faith, that can be the cause of this diversity, seeing there is no diversity in the faith to answer it? To say that the diversity of the effect arises from likeness or sameness in the cause, is a gross and palpable absurdity; and is as much as to say, that difference is produced by no difference: Which is the same thing as to say, that nothing produces something.

2. If there were a difference in the effects of faith, but no difference in the faith itself, then no difference of faith could be shewed by the effects. But that is contrary to Scripture, and particularly to James ii. 18. "Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: Shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works." The apostle can mean nothing else by this, than that I will shew thee by my works that I have a right sort of faith. I will shew thee that my faith is a better faith than that of those who have no works. I will shew thee the difference of the causes, by the difference of the effect. This the apostle thought good arguing. Christ thought it was good arguing to argue the difference of the tree from the difference of the fruits; Matth. xii. 33. "A tree is known by its fruit." How can this be, when there is no difference in the tree? When the nature of the tree is the same, and when, indeed, though there be a difference of the effects, there is no difference at all in the faith that is the cause? And if there is no difference in the faith that is the cause, then certainly no difference can be shewn by the effects. When we see two human bodies, and see actions performed and works produced by the one, and not by the other, we determine that there is an internal difference in the bodies themselves: We conclude that one is alive, and the other dead; that one has an operative nature, an active spirit in it, and that the other has none; which is a very essential difference in the causes themselves. Just so we argue an essential difference between a saving and common faith, by the works or effects produced; as the apostle in that context observes, in the last verse of the chapter, "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."

I come now, in the second place, to shew wherein saving faith differs essentially from common faith: And shall endeavor to prove what I lay down from the Scripture, which will give farther evidence to the truth of the doctrine.

There is, in the nature and essence of saving faith, a receiving of the object of faith, not only in the assent of the judgment, but with the heart, or with the inclination and will

of the soul. There is in saving faith, a receiving of the truth, not only with the assent of the mind, but with the consent of the heart; as is evident by 2 Thess. ii. 10. "Received not the love of the truth that they might be saved." And the apostle, describing the nature of saving faith, from the example of the ancient patriarchs, Heb. xi. describes their faith thus, verse 13. "These all died in faith, not having received the promises; but, having seen them afar off, were persuaded of them, and embraced them." And so the Evangelist John calls faith a receiving of Christ; John i. 12. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." Here, the apostle expressly declares, that he whom he means by a receiver, was the same with a believer on Christ, or one that has saving faith. And what else can be meant by receiving Christ, or accepting him, than an accepting him in heart? It is not a taking him with the hand, or any external taking or accepting him, but the acceptance of the mind. The acceptance of the mind is the act of the mind towards an object as acceptable, but that in a special manner, as the act of the inclination or will. And it is farther evident, that saving faith has its seat not only in the speculative understanding or judgment, but in the heart or will; because otherwise, it is not properly of the nature of a virtue, or any part of the moral goodness of the mind: For virtue has its special and immediate seat in the will; and that qualification, that is not at all seated there, though it be a cause of virtue, or an effect of it, yet is not properly any virtue of the mind, nor can properly be in itself a moral qualification, or any fulfilment of a moral rule. But it is evident, that saving faith is one of the chief virtues of a saint, one of the greatest virtues prescribed in the moral law of God. Matth. xxiii. 23. "Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; for ye pay tithe of mint, and anise, and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone." It is a principal duty that God required, John vi. 28, 29. "Then said they unto him, What shall we do that we may work the works

of God ? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom God hath sent." 1 John iii. 23. "And this is his commandment, that ye believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment." And therefore it is called most holy faith, Jude 20. But if it be not seated in the will, it is no more an holy faith, than the faith of devils. That it is most holy, implies, that it is one thing wherein Christian holiness does principally consist.

An objection may be raised against this last particular, viz. that the words, faith and believing, in common language, signify no more than the assent of the understanding.

Answer 1. It is not at all strange, that in matters of divinity and of the gospel of Christ, which are so exceedingly diverse from the common concerns of life, and so much above them, some words should be used in somewhat of a peculiar sense. The languages used among the nations of the world, were not first framed to express the spiritual and supernatural things of the gospel of Christ, but the common concernments of human life. Hence it comes to pass, that language in its common use, is not exactly adapted to express things of this nature ; so that there is a necessity, that when the phrases of common speech are adopted into the gospel of Christ, they should some of them be used in a sense somewhat diverse from the most ordinary use of them in temporal concerns. Words were first devised to signify the more ordinary concerns of life : Hence, men find a necessity, even in order to express many things in human arts and sciences, to use words in something of a peculiar sense ; the sense being somewhat varied from their more ordinary use ; and the very same words, as terms of art, do not signify exactly the same thing that they do in common speech. This is well known to be the case in innumerable instances ; because the concerns of the arts and sciences are so diverse from the common concerns of life, that unless some phrases were adopted out of common language, and their signification something varied, there would be no words at all to be found to signify such and such things pertaining to those arts. But

the things of the gospel of Christ are vastly more diverse from the common concerns of life, than the things of human arts and sciences: Those things being heavenly things, and of the most spiritual and sublime nature possible, and most diverse from earthly things. Hence the use of words in common language, must not be looked upon as an universal rule to determine the signification of words in the gospel: But the rule is the use of words in Scripture language. What is found in fact to be the use of words in the Bible, by comparing one place with another, that must determine the sense in which we must understand them.

Answer 2. The words in the original, translated faith, and believing, such as πιστις, πιστευω πιστος, and πεποιθησις, as often used in common language, implied more than the mere assent of the understanding: They were often used to signify affiance or trusting; which implies an act of the will, as well as of the understanding: It implies, that the thing believed is received as good and agreeable, as well as true. For trusting always relates to some good sought and aimed at in our trust; and therefore ever more implies the acceptance of the heart, and the embracing of the inclination, and desire of the soul. And therefore, trusting in Christ for salvation, implies, that he and his redemption, and those things wherein his salvation consists, are agreeable and acceptable to us.

Answer 3. Supposing saving faith to be what Calvinistical divines have ordinarily supposed it to be, there seems to be no one word in common language, so fit to express it, as faith, πιστις, as it most commonly is in the original. Orthodox divines, in the definitions of faith, do not all use exactly the same terms, but they generally come to the same thing. Their distinctions generally signify as much as a person's receiving Christ and his salvation as revealed in the gospel, with his whole soul; acquiescing in what is exhibited as true, excellent, and sufficient for him. And to express this complex act of the mind, I apprehend no word can be found more significant than faith, which signifies both assenting and consenting: Because the object of the act is wholly supernatural, and above the reach of mere reason, and therefore exhibit-

ed only by revelation and divine testimony: And the person to be believed in, is exhibited and offered in that revelation, especially under the character of a Saviour, and so, as an object of trust: And the benefits are all spiritual, invisible, wonderful and future. If this be the true account of faith, beware how you entertain any such doctrine, as that there is no essential difference between common and saving faith; and that both consist in a mere assent of the understanding to the doctrines of religion. That this doctrine is false, appears by what has been said; and if it be false, it must needs be exceedingly dangerous. Saving faith, as you well know, is abundantly insisted on in the Bible, as in a peculiar manner the condition of salvation; being the thing by which we are justified. How much is that doctrine insisted on in the New Testament! We are said to be "justified by faith, and by faith alone: By faith we are saved; and this is the work of God, that we believe on him whom he hath sent: The just shall live by faith: We are all the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ: He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." Therefore, doubtless, saving faith, whatsoever that be, is the grand condition of an interest in Christ, and his great salvation. And if it be so, of what vast importance is it, that we should have right notions of what it is? For certainly no one thing whatever, nothing in religion is of greater importance, than that which teaches us how we may be saved. If salvation itself be of infinite importance, then it is of equal importance that we do not mistake the terms of it; and if this be of infinite importance, then that doctrine that teaches that to be the term, that is not so, but very diverse, is infinitely dangerous. What we want a revelation from God for chiefly, is, to teach us the terms of his favor, and the way of salvation. And that which the revelation God has given us in the Bible teaches to be the way, is faith in Christ. Therefore, that doctrine that teaches something else to be saving faith, that is essentially another thing, teaches entirely another way of salvation: And therefore such doctrine does in effect make void the revelation we have in the Bible; as it makes void the special end of it, which is to

teach us the true way of salvation. The gospel is the revelation of the way of life by faith in Christ. Therefore, he who teaches something else to be that faith, which is essentially diverse from what the gospel of Christ teaches, he teaches another gospel; and he does in effect teach another religion than the religion of Christ. For what is religion, but that way of exercising our respect to God, which is the term of his favor and acceptance to a title to eternal rewards? The Scripture teaches this, in a special manner, to be saving faith in Jesus Christ. Therefore, he that teaches another faith instead of this, teaches another religion. Such doctrine as I have opposed, must be destructive and damning, i. e. directly tending to man's damnation; leading such as embrace it, to rest in something essentially different from the grand condition of salvation. And therefore, I would advise you, as you would have any regard to your own soul's salvation, and to the salvation of your posterity, to beware of such doctrine as this.

Reasons against Dr. Watts's *Notion of the Pre-existence of Christ's Human Soul.*

1. God's manner with all creatures, is, to appoint them a trial, before he admits them to glory and confirmed happiness. Especially may this be expected before such honor and glory as the creating of the world, and other things which Dr. Watts ascribes to Christ's human soul.

2. If the preexisting soul of Christ created the world, then, doubtless, he upholds and governs it. The same Son of God that did one, does the other. He created all things, and by Him all things consist. And if so, how was his dominion confined to the Jewish nation, before his incarnation, but extends to all nations since? Besides, there are many things ascribed in the Old Testament to the Son of God, in those very places, which Dr. Watts himself supposes to speak of Him, that imply his government of the whole world, and all nations. The same person that is spoken of as King of Israel, is represented as the Governor of the world.

3. According to this scheme, the greatest of the works of the Son in his created nature, implying the greatest exaltation, was His first work of all; viz. His creating all things, all worlds, all things visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: And this before ever he had any trial at all of his obedience, &c. At least, this work seems much greater than judging the world at the Last Day; which the Scripture often speaks of as one of the highest parts of his exaltation, which he has in reward for his obedience and sufferings: And Dr. Watts himself supposes his honors, since his humiliation, to be much greater than before.

4. The Scipture represents the visible dominion of Christ over the world as a complex Person; or his sitting at the right hand of God the Father, and governing the world as the Father's vicegerent, as a new thing, after his ascension. But by Dr. Watts's scheme, it cannot be so.

5. Satan or Lucifer, before his fall, was the Morning Star, the Covering Cherub, the highest and brightest of all creatures.

6. On this scheme, it will follow, that the covenant of redemption was made with a person that was not *sui juris*, and not at liberty to act his own mere good pleasure, with respect to undertaking to die for sinners; but was obliged to comply, on the first intimation that it would be wellpleasing to God, and a thing that he chose,

7. According to that scheme, the man Christ Jesus was not properly the son of the Virgin, and so the son of man. To be the son of a woman, is to receive being in both soul and body, in consequence of a conception in her womb. The soul is the principal part of the man; and sonship implies derivation of the soul as well as the body, by conception. Not that the soul is a part of the mother, as the body is. Though the soul is no part of the mother, and be immediately given by God, yet that hinders not its being derived by conception; it being consequent on it, according to a law of nature. It is agreeable to a law of nature, that where a perfect human body is conceived in the womb of a woman, and properly nourished and increased, a human soul should come into being: And conception may as properly be the cause whence it is derived, as many other natural effects are derived from natural causes or antecedents. For it is the power of God which produces these effects, though it be according to an established law. The soul being so much the principal part of man, a derivation of the soul by conception, is the chief thing implied in a man's being the son of a woman.

8. According to what seems to be Dr. Watts' scheme, the Son of God is no distinct divine Person from the Father. So far as He is a divine Person, He is the same Person with the Father. So that in the covenant of redemption, the Father covenants with himself, and He takes satisfaction of himself, &c. Unless you will say, that one nature covenanted with the other; the two natures *in the* same person covenanted together, and one nature in the same person, took satisfaction of the other nature in the same person. But how does this confound our minds, instead of helping our ideas, or making them more easy and intelligible!

9. The Son of God, as a distinct Person, was from eternity. It is said, Mic. v. 2. "His goings forth were of old, from everlasting." So Prov. viii. 23. "I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was." So he is called Isa. ix. 6, "The everlasting Father." I know of no expressions used in Scripture, more strong, to signify the eternity of the Father himself.

10. Dr. Watts supposes the world to be made by the preexistent soul of Christ; and thinks it may properly be so said, though the knowledge and power of this preexistent soul could not extend to the most minute parts, every atom, &c.—But it is evidently the design of the Scripture to assure us that Christ made all things whatever in the absolute universality. John i. 3. "All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made." Col. i. 16, 17. "For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by Him, and for Him; and He is before all things, and by

Him all things consist." Now, if we suppose matter to be infinitely divisible, it will follow, that let His wisdom and power be as great as they will, if finite, but a few of those individual things that are made were the effects of his power and wisdom: Yea, that the number of the things that were made by Him, are so few, that they bear no proportion to others, that did not immediately fall under His notice; or that of the things that are made, there are ten thousand times, yea infinitely more, not made by Him, than are made by Him:—And so, but infinitely few of their circumstances are ordered by His wisdom.

11. It is said Heb. ii. 8. "Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that He put all in subjection under Him, He left nothing that is not put under him." Here it is represented, that God the Father has put every individual thing under the power and government of another person, distinct from Himself. But this cannot be true of the human soul of Christ, as it must be according to Dr. Watts's scheme, let the powers of that be never so great, if they are not infinite. For things and circumstances, and dependencies and consequences of things in the world, are infinite in number; and therefore a finite understanding and power cannot extend to them: Yea, it can extend to but an infinitely small part of the whole number of individuals, and their circumstances and consequences. Indeed in order to the disposal of a few things in their motions and successive changes, to a certain precise issue, there is need of infinite exactness, and so need of infinite power and wisdom.

12. The work of creation. And so the work of upholding all things in being, can, in no sense, be properly said to be the work of any created nature. If the created nature gives forth the word, as Joshua did, when he said, "Sun, stand thou still;" yet it is not that created nature that does it: That being that depends himself on creating power, does not properly do any thing towards creation, as Joshua did nothing towards stopping the sun in his course. So that it cannot be true in Dr. Watts's scheme, that that Son of God, who is a distinct Person from God the Father, did at all, in any manner of propriety, create the world, nor does he uphold it or govern it. Nor can those things that Christ often says of himself, be true; as, "The Father worketh hitherto and I work."—"Whatsoever the Father doth, those doth the Son likewise," John v. 17, 19; it being very evident, that the works of creating and upholding and governing the world are ascribed to the Son, as a distinct Person from the Father.

13. It is one benefit or privilege of the Person of Christ, when spoken of as distinct from the Father, to have the Spirit of God under him, to be at his disposal, and to be his Messenger; which is

infinitely too much for any creature: John xv. 26; xvi. 7, 13, 14; and Acts ii 33.

14. Not only is the word *Elohim* in the plural number, but it is joined to a verb of the plural number, in Gen. xx. 13. *When God caused me to wander from my Father's house.* The word *Hithgu, caused to wander*, is in the plural number. This is agreeable to the use of plural verbs, adjectives and pronouns, in Gen. i. 26; iii 22; xi. 7. See other instances in Gen. xxxv. 7; Exodus xxxii. 4, compared with Neh. ix. 18; Isaiah xvi. 6.

The very frequent joining of the word *Elohim*, a word in the plural number, with the word *Jehovah*, a word in the singular number, (as may be seen in places referred to in the English concordance, under the words, Lord God, Lord his God, Lord my God, Lord our God, Lord their God, Lord thy God, Lord your God) seems to be a significant indication of the union of several divine persons in one essence. The word *Jehovah* signifies as much as the word *Essence*, and is the proper name of God with regard to his selfexistent, eternal, allsufficient, perfect, and immutable Essence. Moses seems to have regard to something remarkable in thus calling *Elohim*, the plural, so often by the singular name, *Jehovah*; especially in that remark, which he makes for the special observation of God's people Israel, in Deut. vi. 4, "Hear, O Israel, The Lord our God is one Lord." In the original, it is *Jehovah Elohenu Jehovah Ehadh*; the more proper translation of which is, *Jehovah our God is one Jehovah.* The verb *is*, is understood, and properly inserted between *Jehovah Elohenu* and *Jehovah Ehadh* thus, *Jehovah Elohenu* is *Jehovah Ehadh*; which, if most literally translated, is thus, *Jehovah Our divine Persons is one Jehovah*: As though Moses, in this remark, had a particular reference to the word *Elohim* being in the plural number, and would guard the people against imagining from thence that there was a plurality of Essences or Beings, among whom they were to divide their affections and respect.

A farther confirmation, that the name *Elohim*, when used as the name of the True God, signifies some plurality, is, that this same name is commonly, all over the Hebrew bible, used to signify the gods of the Heathens, when many gods are spoken of. See those places in the Hebrew bible, which are referred to in the English concordance, under the word *Gods*.

In Exodus xx. 2, 3, when it is said in the third verse, "Thou shalt have no other Gods before Me." The word is the same as in the foregoing verse, where it is said, "I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt." It is *Elohim* in both verses: I am the Jehovah, thy *Elohim*: Thou shalt have no other

Elohim. Yet the latter *Elohim* is joined with an adjective of the plural number; which seems naturally to lead the children of Israel to whom God spake these words, to suppose a plurality in the *Elohim* which brought them out of Egypt, implied in the name *Jehovah.* Ps. lviii. 11. "Verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth; *Elohim Shopbetim:* Which literally is, *Elohim*, judges, (in the plural number.) See the evident distinction made between Jehovah *sending*, and Jehovah *sent* to the people, and dwelling in the midst of them, in Zech. ii. 8, 9, 10, 11; and iv. 8, 9, 11. "For thus saith the Lord of Hosts, After the glory hath He *sent* me unto the nations which spoiled you: For he that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of His eye."

"For behold, I will shake mine hand upon them, and they shall be a spoil to their servants: And ye shall know that the Lord of Hosts hath *sent* me."

"Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: For, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord."

"And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people: And I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the Lord of Hosts hath *sent* me unto thee."

"Moreover the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the Lord of Hosts hath *sent* me unto you."

"Then answered I, and said unto him, What are these two olive trees upon the right side of the candlestick, and upon the left side thereof?"

Joshua xxiv. 19. "And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve Jehovah; for he is an Holy God, Elohim Kedhoshim." *He is the Holy Gods.* Not only is the word *Elohim* properly plural, the very same that is used, ver. 15, the Gods which your fathers served, &c.—but the adjective *Holy* is plural. A plural substantive and adjective are used here concerning the True God, just in the same manner as in 1 Sam. iv. 8. "Who shall deliver us out of the hands of these mighty Gods. And in Dan. iv. 8. In whom is the Spirit of the Holy Gods." So ver. 9, 18, and chap. v. 11, that the plural number should thus be used with the epithet *Holy*, agrees well with the doxology of the angels, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts," &c.—Isaiah vi. and Rev. iv.

It is an argument, that the Jews of old understood that there were several persons in the Godhead, and particularly, that when the cherubim, in the 6th of Isaiah, cried "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord of Hosts," they had respect to three persons: That the seventy interpreters, in several places, where the Holy One of Israel is spoken of, use the

plural number; as in Isaiah xli. 16. "Thou shalt glory in the Holy One of Israel:" in the LXX, it is, *συφρανθηση εν τοις αγιοις Ισραηλ.* Isaiah lx. 14. "The Zion of the Holy One of Israel;" it is *σιων αγιων Ισραηλ.* So Jer. li. 5. "Filled with sin against the Holy One of Israel:" *απο των αγιων Ισραηλ.*

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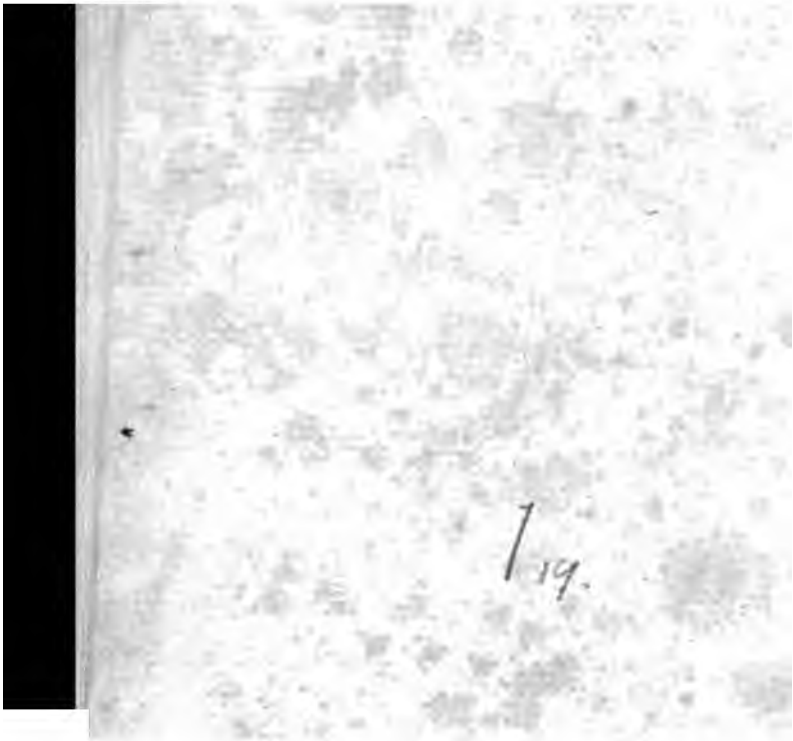

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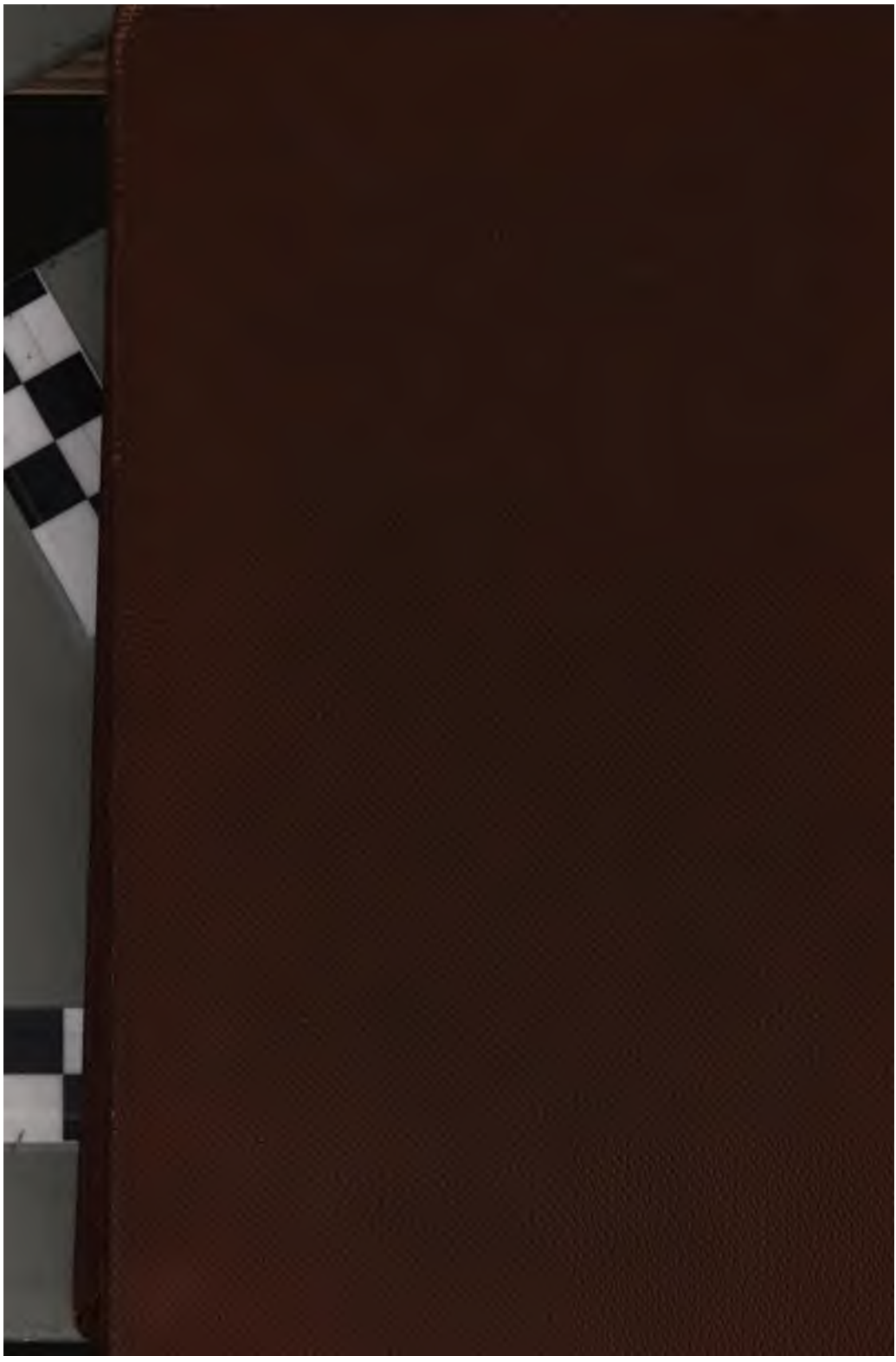
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